

A
DESCRIPTION
OF A
Gospel Church :
WITH
Two Epistles ,
CONCERNING

- I. Prayer in the SPIRIT of Promise.
II. The Intrinsical Work of New Creature-Grace, different from GIFTS. *By R.D.*

To which is added,

An APPENDIX:
IN

A Short PARAPHRASE on the First Four Verses, and Part of the 5th and 6th of the First Chapter of the Song of Songs.

By a Memb.^r of, and in Communion with that Church in New-Street, London; but Formerly a Member of a Church at Cockermouth in Cumberland.

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the Ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein. Hosea 14. last.

L O N D O N,

Printed for, and Sold by Joseph Marshall, at the Bible in Newgate-Street, 1712. Where you may be supply'd with Dr. Marwood's Britanick Ink-Powder, by Wholesale or Retail: Also all sorts of Bibles, &c. and Short-hand Books.

DESCRIPTION

OF THE

NEW

AND

REVISED

EDITION

OF THE

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EDITION

OF THE

THE PREFACE.

AS Absolute Perfect Glory is the Crown that is set upon Preparative Glory, so that Preparative or Progressive Glory is carry'd on by subordinate and ordinary Means, which God has appointed for that End, and tho' the Lord, who is Sovereign of his own Work, could carry on the Glory of his own Grace without the help of any Means; yet he's pleas'd to make use of appointed Methods, that are of his own Institution, to begin and carry on his own Work, 'till he receives them to him; among which the Ministry of the Word is the standing Ordinance, to bring in, and build up his own Church; yet there are Times and Seasons for lesser and subordinate Means, among which Reading is one; and therefore, the Apostle exhorts *Timothy* to Reading, *Until I come, give Attendance to Reading.* There are vacant Times wherein we may improve Time, and find much good, both for informing our Judgments, and helping our Experiences; and I hope, I may say, that I have met with some good this Way. But what am I thus to appear in Publick, with so mean a Piece as this; but as I would not affect Popularity, neither would I seek Vain Glory, so I desire ever to keep a Sight of my self, a Sense of my own wretched Nature, and O that the Lord would keep me low and vile in my own Eyes, while I have Breath to draw. As for my Book, tho' it is but mean, I hope, thro' Divine Blessing from above, it may be of use to those, for whom I chiefly design it, that is, to young Beginners in the Ways of Christ, and to my own native Country, and that also, wherein at present I dwell; but as for you that dwell in

London, here is nothing for you, especially you that are grown up as *tall Cedars in the House of the Lord*, except it be to refresh your Experiences; but if it come into your Hands, you may, if you please, cast your Eye on it, and look it over, and when you have done, you may say, here's nothing but what we very well know, and can give a better Account of, than what is here done. To which I answer, I know it, my Brethren, you that live in *London*, under a powerful Gospel Ministry, have these and all other Truths of Christ, daily inculcated on your Minds; but as to what I have done, it is my Mite, and with the Performance had been better. I know not into what Hands it may fall, but if into those of the Debauched and Prophane, here's nothing for them; but if it come into the Hands of those who are Professors, I know no Offence they can take at it, having carefully avoided all Reflections, except a little on the *Romish Harlot*, as it fell in my Way.

I shall now set forth the Heads of the Book, and let either *Parochial, Presbyterian, Quaker, Anabaptist, Antinomian, or Arminian*, read it; Can any condemn the Knowledge of God, or Faith and Love to our Lord Jesus? Can any be against Praying by the Help of God's Spirit? Can any be against Union and Communion with our Lord Jesus in the Graces of his Spirit; I know none, who fear God will: The Things I have mention'd are the Substance of the Book.

Now I wou'd show a little of what was the first Occasion of my Meditation on these things, which was upwards of 27 Years, by one Mr. Jones, a young Man who was taken into Communion, with whom I had intimate Converse; but O, who was like this Man, for thriving in Grace and Knowledge, so that I knew none in the Church like him. How zealous, forward and growing, was he in Prayer! how much was he for Writing of divine and heavenly Matter, and for spiritual Conferences, helping forward the Work of Grace on others, taking all Occasions for Prayer, and other Duties of Worship, that he could get from the World.

he being an Apprentice; so that if I had been to have sought out a zealous, fire-hot, thriving and growing Christian, it should have been him; but alas! all this was an outside Show, which of a sudden vanish'd: With Grief I speak it, he broke all Bounds, forsook his Covenant, and left off Communion with the Church; so much was he taken with his new Way, that he wrote a Book, which if the Subject Matter had answer'd the Title, I could have embrac'd both him and it, in the Bosom of my Affections. His Book was put into my Hands, and in Reading it, I found so much of the Letter without the Spirit; and of the Shadow without the Substance, that I grew quickly tyr'd with it: I had at that time Thoughts to have answer'd it, I being a young Man, my Gifts were flourishing, and my Spirits lively and active; but tho' my Meditations drew me one Way, yet the World drew me another, and prevail'd; so that I did not set Pen to Paper, tho' then I might better have spar'd time than now, being a single Man: But to on, about that time, our ever faithful Pastor desir'd me to go to him, and discourse him, he he then living within *Newgate*; and tho' I was one of the meanest and most unfit for such a Work, yet I went; whereupon we enter'd into a sharp Debate, but to little purpose; after some time I urg'd, that we must prove a Church by Reformation; that is, wherever there are the highest Degrees of Reformation, there must needs be a true Church; and if we enquire into all Professions, that they, whoever they be, that keep nearest to God's Word in Doctrine, Worship and Government, must needs be a pure Church.

We find in the Primitive Church, that *They continu'd in the Apostles Doctrine, Fellowship, Breaking of Bread and Prayers*. From hence we may conclude, that it is the Practice of all the Churches of our Lord Jesus, successively to the End of the World, to *continue in the Apostles Doctrine, Fellowship, Breaking of Bread and Prayers*; I was not long upon it then, however the weightiest Arguments I could use, had no more Impression upon

him, than Water on a dead Man, or a Seal on a Rock, or Adamant; whereupon I left him as I found him, and have never set Eyes on him since.

I have been the longer on this, wishing, that where-ever this comes, it may be a Warning to all; especially to young ones. Who would have thought, that this young Man would have made such ill use of those blessed Gifts, which God had bestow'd upon him! Wherefore, O young Man, take heed of proud self. Do you find the Gifts of the Spirit in you? Do you find the Gifts of the Spirit encrease in you? Do you know more than you did? Can you discourse more of Good Matters? Can you pray better than you did? O then take Care of a blasting time, beware of an old Serpent, a tempting Devil; that he does not puff up, or crush down your Gifts and Graces, and cause them to dwindle to nothing. I think, of all the young Men I knew, he was the most flourishing in Gifts; but alas! what became of 'em all! I will not speak what I heard of him, because many Lies go abroad. But now I would give Counsel to young Ones, and my self, in three Things.

1st. That we lye low before the Lord, in a Sense of our own Wretchedness; a Sight of God brings us to a true Sight of Self; we are never real Christians, 'till we come to find and know our selves, and then we see cause to lye in the Dust while we live; when we see the wretched Workings of our Heart, 'tis enough to sink us into Despair; it's as natural for my Heart to rebel and turn from God, as it is for the Fish to swim in Water. What Cause have we ever to keep a Sight and Sense of self, so as to lye low in the Dust, for Fear of Departing from the Lord.

2^{dly}. Keep close to the Fulness in Jesus: He is our Fulness, he is our Help and Strength, God has laid *Help on one's that's mighty*; who is that? 'tis the Lord Jesus, *the Lyon of the Tribe of Judah*; the only Way to keep from Falling, is to keep in, and with Jesus, he is our Security from Apostacy, and the Strength of Israel,

3^{dly}.

3dly. In order to prevent Apostacy and falling away, lean upon absolute Promises. Absolute Promises are the security of the Church, sincerity lives upon absolute Promises; it is not the strength of Gifts, that keeps from falling, its the strength of the promise of Grace. It is not our working, but the working of the Promise in us, that upholds our Souls in Life: for indeed, it is the working of self in us with those Gifts of the Spirit, that makes us Shipwreck, and sinks to the bottom of the Sea; self stirs up it self in all things we do, except it be subdued by the Cross of Jesus; self would fain be sharers with Jesus, in the Kingdom; self mingles it self, with the things of Jesus; self elevates its self, and lifts up its self against Jesus, as *Korah, Dathan and Abiram* did against *Moses*. And here is the ruin of Soul, Gifts, and Profession, without Grace in the Promise: for as the Church is Christ's by the Covenant of Promise, so they become Children and Heirs of Promise, with Christ their Lord, who is the Covenant himself. Now there are many, who are the true-born Children of *Abraham*, and Heirs of Promise, that travel long, it may be, under the strugglings and workings of self, before that Christ is all in all; for we know, that self is not rooted out of the Soul in one Day, neither in Months, or Years, no more than the Heathen Nations were out of *Canaan*, after that *Israel* had Possession. Therefore, tho' our Lord Christ be all in all, to the whole spiritual Seed and Heirs of Promise, yet the most Spiritual and renewed have some relicks of self, while on this side the Grave, in one respect or another. But we may satisfy our selves in this one thing, that those Souls who have most of the Spiritual in-dwelling presence of Jesus in them, they have the least of self in them.

Again, at such times when the Saints have a fulness, of the Grace of Jesus, that they are full of Faith, Love, Joy, and every other Grace, there is nothing of self can be discerned, or has any place in the Heart, at such times; now all this is to evidence our necessity

of living by Faith on absolute Promises, looking unto him alone, who is the Fountain, in whom they all are, therefore as the most beautiful Profession may be attended with the life of self, so where the life of Faith is wanting, self will be the ruin of the purest Profession; so that we have always need to pray with that Holy Man, *O Lord, deliver me from that evil Man, my self.*

Now if we consider the Promises, as they are given out under the second Covenant, they run all thus upon God's Gift, and the Churches receiving that Gift; they run all in the stream of Free-Love, Free-Will; thus *I will be merciful, I will not forsake, I will put my fear, I will give a new Heart*; these and many more I might name, which are full, free, and everlasting, as they are in Christ God's Covenant. Now these are the Churches Treasure in Jesus Christ, and all Good is given forth from him, as Food, Life, and nourishment of their Faith. This is evident in that great Treasure Promise, in the 10th of John 17 and 18 verses, in the 18th Verse 'tis redoubled there to ratifie and confirm the truth of that life in Christ, which every saved Soul receives by Promise, in the 14th verse he calls them Sheep, *my Sheep*, says he, *hear my Voice*; in which observe, that our Lord Jesus has a flock of People in this World, whom he calls his Sheep; *my Sheep hear my Voice*. And they are called his Flock, in *Isaiah*, he shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd. And they are called his little Flock. Again they hear my Voice; that is, it is the very nature of Christ's Sheep to hear Christ's Voice; they follow me, that is, they follow me in my Precepts, Grace and Promise, *I know them*, that is, I know them with the knowledge of Grace, Love and Mercy, *I know them*, so as to pardon, justifie, and save them. By this knowledge, shall my righteous Servant justifie many. He follows with an absolute Promise, *I give unto them eternal life*. Hence Note, That what Life our Lord gives, never has any Death in it; it is Life for ever, it's Life everlasting. Again, they shall never perish, *Heaven*
and

and Earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. Has he said, and will he not do it, he is not a Man, that he should lie; they shall never perish: why so? because none shall pluck 'em out of his hand, Satan wou'd fain have pluck'd Job out of Christ's Hands, but he could not, because he knew, and could say, *I know that my Redeemer lives.* Fain would he have pluck'd Peter out of his Hand, but could not, because his Lord made intercession for him, and he was built on that Rock Christ. Let Earth and Hell combine together, they shall not pluck the Church of Christ out of his Hands: Why so, because that Grace, which is in the Promise, Divine Power doth secure. Again, the 4th Promise is, *my Father which gave them me is greater then all, and none shall pluck them out of my Fathers hands.* This is a farther confirmation of the Promise; supposing it were possible to pluck them out of Christ's Hand, which we are not in the least to imagine, for he is God over all, blessed for ever; yet we are to understand, that our Lord speaks with reference to the Humane Nature, which he had assumed, in which respect his Father was greater. And therefore he argues the promise further, to take away every Scruple, or Doubt, that might arise, and help us, that none is able to pluck them out of his Fathers Hand: So that to confirm, and ratifie the immutability of his Promise, both God the Father, and God the Son, are engaged by themselves to make them good. Now what are all these his Promises for, but for Faith to feed on, and to be nourish'd and comforted in. Faith feeds much on those great and precious Promises; Faith dwells much in 'em, and keeps 'em much on the Heart. Faith is not like the Bird, that hops from Bow to Bow, without any stop at all; but like the Bee, that sucks sweetness from every Flower it comes at; even as the Bee sits on the Flower, so Faith and Love stay on a Promise! as the Promise is in Christ, so all the Peace, Joy, and Comfort that comes to us, comes from Jesus; we may run over all the Promises throughout the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelations, and

and get them by rote, as Children their A, B, C; but all this time they are of no more use then cold Water to a sick Stomach; and all this for want of the reception of Jesus. Wherever Christ dwells in the Heart, there are all the Promises, Faith, Grace, and every good Thing, so that if we have Christ, we have all; but if not, *the wrath of God abides on us*, according to *John, he that hath the Son hath Life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not Life*. What hath he then? Death, even Death Eternal. The great and only concern of every living Soul in this World, is to labour for a spiritual saving interest in our Lord Jesus; for how can we live without him? but alas! how can we die without him; nay, how dare we die without him; how shall I, or you, dare to come before the great and glorious God out of Christ, who *will by no means clear the guilty*. Suppose we were this very Night to die, and answer before God, what would be our Thoughts? can you, or I say, I am going to Jesus, *whom my soul loves*? I am going to him, whom my Soul has sought for many Years. I am going to that Jesus, who took me into Marriage Union and Communion with himself. I am going to that Jesus who did once bleed on the Cross for me; but how dost thou know, that this Jesus pour'd out his Soul unto Death for thee? I know it by the voice of his Word, that reach'd my dead Soul, and made it live. I know it by the call of his Grace, that brought over my whole Soul, to cleave to my Lord Jesus, as my Lord and King, my Teacher and Priest, my Lord, my all, knowing that if I live in him, I shall die in him; but if I live in self, I shall die in self, and be the most cursed Creature in Torments; and this it will be with the World that die out of Jesus.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE best Mirth, or the Melody of *Sion*, being a Collection of Spiritual Hymns, composed upon Divers Occasions, By John Wright,

A N
E P I S T L E
T O

*The Church of Christ, at Cocker-
mouth, in Cumberland;
and to all, and every Member
thereof, the Author wisheth all
Spiritual Blessings and Bles-
sedness; ev'n Life and Peace,
Rest and Joy, for Evermore.*

Christian Believers, and Followers of the Lamb,

K Nowing in my self, that the smallest Measure
of Truth, especially those Truths that an Eter-
nity of Blessedness depends upon, can be no Way
ungrateful, or displeasing to a seeking Mind, or
well-informed Judgment, let the Vessel thorow
which they come, be never so mean, and con-
temptible, and very low in Apprehension, the
more it is to the Glory of God, who is Truth
itself, and the Author of it. And as those Truths
that discover Jesus, and Life by him, are such
Things, as our Lord himself tells us, are hid from
the wise and prudent, and revealed unto Babes; even
so they are some of those good and perfect Gifts, that
come down from above, and nourish the Soul up to
Eter-

Eternal Life, through Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus : And I have, according to my little Measure, cast my Mite into the Treasury of Gospel Truths, and tho' the Style and Method be poor, mean, and low, and want the Flourish of high Notions, yet Truth needs no Varnish, save an humble, meek and broken Heart.

But I proceed to acquaint you with the Reason of this my Dedication, or Directory unto you, as well as unto the Church where I belong, 'tis, because I receiv'd my first Birth of the New Creature, Grace of Life there, and was taken into Fellowship and Communion with you about a Twelve Month before I came to *London*, which is near five and thirty Years ago. And I desire to wonder and admire at free Grace, that brought me under Mr. *Eggesfield's*, and Mr. *Larkum's* Ministry, when my wretched State and miserable Condition by Nature was discover'd, and the only Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ reveal'd, I say, I cannot but admire at that Goodness, that brought me under such an eminent, faithful and powerful Ambassador, as Mr. *Larkum*, whom I ever highly esteem, love and reverence, as one well furnish'd in his Work of Preaching, and also in Expository Divinity ; but he is gone to possess the Fulness of that Love and Joy, of which he had a Taste before ; and when I think what he was, and how he liv'd, those Words are brought in upon my Mind, *The Memory of the just is blessed, but the Name of the wicked shall rot.* I am glad, God has so well provided for you, in giving you such an able and faithful Minister, as I was told of, when I was in *London*. I do not know any Thing of outward Mercy, would be, or is more desirous, than that I might see you once before I dye, but I see no Likelyhood, nor have any Prospect thereof, for Old

Age is come, and Declinings, grey Hairs and Weakness increase upon me; but tho' we cannot meet in Person, I hope we often meet in Supplications at the Throne of Grace; for all the Prayers of the Saints go by one Spirit to the Angel of the Covenant, and they are presented to the Father out of the Angel's Hand; and as all our Prayers, that go from our selves, out of Christ, are rejected, and as Dung cast upon us, so if our Prayers go to God in Jesus Christ, 'tis by Vertue of that divine Relation; and spiritual Oneness between Jesus and us: Our Persons must be in that spiritual and heavenly Relation with himself before we can be accepted of the Father. As spiritual Union with our Jesus, is the Foundation of actual Imputation, so it is the immediate Cause of all Communication of the sweet Odours of his Grace, from which 'tis said, he will accept them with their *sweet Savour*; that is, from the sweet fragrant Savours of his own Graces, that we are accepted in the beloved; and therefore 'tis said, there was giv'n him *much Incense*, that he should *offer with the Prayers of Saints*; from which we are to understand, that this is chiefly meant of the perfect Sacrifice of himself, which is called a *sweet smelling Savour unto God*; but also, those sweet perfuming Graces of Life, are as Incense offer'd through the spotless Merit of his bloody Death, which is the only Sacrifice and precious Incense, that is alone acceptable and well-pleasing in his Sight; from all which let us admire and wonder at free Love and Mercy.

But the great Thing that we are now concern'd in, is, to know, from what Root, or Principle those Prayers proceed, that are as Incense and sweet Perfume, because the holy Prophet David cries, *Let my Prayer come before thee as Incense, and the lifting up of my Hands as the Evening-Sacrifice.* To which I shall

answer, First, Negatively ; and then Affirmatively.

First, 'Tis not the Prayers of a natural Man that can be as sweet Incense, because they are in a State of *Enmity with G O D*, and *without God and Christ in the World*, and as such, there is *none that doth good, no not one* ; that which they offer is unclean.

Secondly, It is not from the Strength of Gifts, yea, though they be perform'd by the Spirit, because they come from a filthy, unclean, unrenew'd Heart, and therefore there is some Truth in that Notion, that we may pray our selves into Hell, and that is for Want of the sweet perfuming Savour of his Grace, that brings and keeps our Souls in Jesus Christ : But I shall not stay here, but proceed to the Affirmative.

1st. Then, I would lay down this as a standing Truth, that all real, true and right Prayer is wrought in the secret Powers of the Soul, by the indwelling Presence of the Holy Ghost, and therefore the Apostles crys, *We know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helps our Infirmities* ; in which we are to understand, that these Words take in both Matter and Form, both Words and Manner of Prayer ; as if he should say, we do not know the cursed State and filthy Working of our Hearts. We do not know those cursed Lusts and wicked Imaginations, that are as Fountains, flowing over the Banks of our Souls. We do not know God, as he is a Consuming Fire in himself, to all Wickedness, as it is Rebellion against his holy Word and Law. We do not know Jesus Christ, how, or in what manner he was a Saviour ; or whether he will save us or no. We do not know the Promises of Grace, whether they are conditional or absolute. We know none of those Things, but as
the

the Spirit does reveal, or discover them to us, and from thence it does beget, and create Petitions and Prayers in the Heart. But

2dly. As to the Manner, we know not how to believe, or what to Believe, neither have we any Desires, or Affections to pray with; as if he should say, we have neither Light, Faith, Love, Hope, Desires, or Breathings of Soul, but as the Spirit helps, that is, the Spirit works up the Heart in all those Vertues, Graces and Supplications, which he himself is the Author of: From all which 'tis evident, that all true Prayer is begotten in the Heart, and by the Spirit of Grace. Again, Prayer is the first Conception, or the first Breath of the New Creature, and this is clear from St. Paul, in the first Beginning of his Conversion it is said, Behold, or take Notice, *that he prayeth*; we cannot but think, that Paul did pray much, and often before, for the Pharisees were a People that made long Prayers, but all his Prayers were meer Trash and Dung before Conversion, until the Spirit of the Lord breath'd Light and Life into his dead Heart, and ev'n then they were nothing in Comparison of Christ. But here I would answer a seeming Contradiction in what I said before, and that is, that Light is the first Grace in the New Creature, and in this of Prayer it is the first also. To which I answer, take Light single in itself, and separate from other Graces, it cannot be said to be the first Life in the New Creature; because many Times there is great Light upheld in the Understanding, when as yet there is no saving Efficacy of the Grace of Life at all; but take Light when other Graces flow in upon it, then it is the first, but yet not as to Life; for the New Creature Life is summ'd up in these two Words, *Faith and Love*; which subsist chiefly in the Will and Affections, and Prayer is immediately

diately begotten in the Heart with other Graces, and then discovers it self first in the New Creature Life, though Light and Conviction is antecedent, and always goes before it: But to return to what I was upon concerning Prayer in the Spirit, or by the working of the Spirit in us; it is more clear and manifest, and that by infallible Witness, or Testimony from Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, which is the only standing Rule of all Worship, but more especially that of Prayer, because Prayer is the most universal and constant part of Worship, and that which doth run through every part of a Believers Life; but more particularly, it is the most constant and universal part of Worship in the Church, and therefore our Lord Jesus calls his House by this very name, *My House shall be called the House of Prayer* to all People: From whence we may Note, that Christ has a Church. 2dly, That this Church or House is known by Prayer, it shall be called *the House of Prayer*; but what Prayer? not the Shape, Shadow, or Picture of Prayer, but the inward spiritual breathings of Prayer, performed by the work of the Holy Ghost in us, and therefore the Apostle exhorts the Church, to *pray with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit*; as if he should say, take great Care, and look well to this, that all your Prayers be performed in the Supplication of the Spirit. And again, the same Apostle says, *I will pray with the Spirit, and with the understanding also*; that is, I will understand by the Spirit what I pray: And again, he exhorts another Church, that they *build up themselves in their most holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost*; From whence Note, That the Prayers of the Church are the Prayers of the Spirit; or that the Prayers of the Church are wrought in the Heart by the Holy Ghost, and this must of necessity be so, because the Church is always known by this one Thing, and that is, that they are

a People, called and sanctified by the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghost; and as such, these Gifts and Graces are best known in Prayers, Supplications, and Thanksgivings, performed in the Church, or Family, or in secret and many other ways, something of which I shall speak hereafter; Hence then, what Need have you and I, and all the Members of Churches, to take Care that we do not rest in the outward Shadow, or Words of Prayer; but that we live in the Spirit, Life and Grace of Prayer. And this brings me to a further Witness of it, that all true, real, and right Prayer is wrought in the Heart by the Holy Ghost, and that because all such Prayer is the Fulfilment of God's great and gracious Promise to his People; this is clear from *Zachr. 12. 10. I will pour out the Spirit of Grace and Supplication, and they shall look on him, &c.* From which take Notice, that when any Soul is endued with the Grace of Prayer, even then is that Word of the Lord fulfilled in it, that is, the Word of Promise. Again, whenever the Spirit of Grace is poured out upon any Soul, it becomes also a Spirit of Supplication; or thus, it is essential with the Spirit of Grace, to be a Spirit of Supplication, which the Apostle seems to take Notice of, when he exhorts them to *pray in the Holy Ghost*, as before mention'd; that is, pray in those Graces and Supplications, which fulfil the Word of Promise. Again

3dly. Where the Grace of Prayer is, it becomes an Habit or Disposition in the Soul; it becomes a second Nature in the Soul, and that upon all Occasions, and at all Seasons, and so when Temptations are at work, Prayer in the Spirit of Faith prevails against them; when an evil Corruption doth spring up and overflow, it may be, all the Powers of the Soul, Prayer in the Spirit doth overcome them. Again, when melancholy Fits seize the Spirit, and put a Damp upon the Soul, yet

Prayer in the Spirit overcomes at last. Again, when worldly Troubles increase, and the Sorrows of Death overflow and sink the Soul, so that it cannot speak, nor hath neither Heart nor Tongue for Christ, yet in Time, Prayer in the Spirit doth prevail and overcome; and that because the Habit of Desire and Principle of Prayer is not lost.

4thly, Prayer in the Spirit has always the Promise of Mercy for its Foundation: And thus said David, *Lord, Thou hast promised all this Good unto thy Servant, therefore have I found in my Heart to pray this Prayer before thee.* And so old Jacob, when his Brother was coming against him with four hundred Men, he goes to Prayer with a Promise, *Lord, thou saidst thou wouldst do me good: And thus it is with praying in the Spirit, God has promised to pardon all our Sins, and blot out our Iniquities, now the Spirit pulls this Promise upon the Heart to plead with God in Prayer.* Again, God has promised to give a new Heart, and a new Spirit, yea, a Heart of Flesh; now the Spirit puts this Promise upon the Heart to plead with God. God has promised to be *merciful to our Unrighteousness*; now the Spirit of Prayer pleads this Promise with God. And so in all the rest, so that the Spirit of Faith is the Life of Prayer, even so the Promises are the Foundation of Prayer. Again,

5thly, As all true and fervent Prayer is the Work of the Holy Ghost in us, so it may be known by this, that it is always in the Heart more than in the Tongue. I may safely speak it by good Experience, from my travailling in this Duty above thirty six Years, that there is a thousand times, and a thousand more of Prayer in the Heart than in the Tongue. And thus the Apostle tells us, *Rom. 8. The Spirit maketh Intercession for us with Groans and Sighs that cannot be uttered.* From hence learn, that a true Believer is no Stranger to mental, or ejaculatory Prayer. Thus the

Prophet

Prophet *Nehemiah*, when he was speaking to the King for the House of his Fathers, even while he was speaking, his Heart was at Prayer unto God: And so *Hannah* was earnest in Prayer when her Lips went, but spoke no Words: So *Moses* cried unto the Lord, when we find not one Word spoken. Hence we find so often in Holy Writ, that the true Nature of Prayer is the pouring out of the Soul unto God. But

6thly, Prayer in the Spirit lives in another, and looks to another for Acceptance; as the Soul lives in Jesus by Faith, so it lives in him by Prayer for Acceptance.

7thly, Prayer in the Spirit takes the whole Word of God for its Rule; As for Example, what the Word discovers to be Sin, that the Spirit prays against. What Duty the Word reveals, that the Spirit prays for Help to perform. What the Word discovers of Grace in Jesus, the Spirit prays for the Fulfilment of that in its Heart. Again, what the Word discovers of seducing Spirits, or damning Heresies, Errors, or Delusions, that the Spirit prays to be delivered from. Hence learn, that when either you or I hear any Body pray by the Spirit, we may know by this one thing, whether it be the good Spirit of Jesus; namely, by this, if their Prayers be directed by the Word of God, if not, it is not the right Spirit. Again

8thly, Prayer in the Spirit keeps the Soul in this Duty, within the Beams of its own Light; it does not seek to others for Light, or look for borrowed Lights, but keeps within its own: But you will say, do not you that pray by the Spirit make Use of borrowed Lights sometimes; yea, always you have something either of *Moses's* Prayer, or *Samuel's*, *David's*, *Solomon's*, the Prophets, or Apostles Prayers, but especially that Prayer that our Lord taught us, and are not

all these borrowed Lights? To which I answer, That though the Saints do always thus, yet it cannot properly be called a borrowed Light; and my Argument is this, which to clear, I would lay down this Assertion: (1st.) That all the Prayers of Saints and Holy Men of God, that we find in Scripture, are the Prayers of the Spirit; or the Holy Ghost is the sole Author, and principal Agent of all their Prayers. (2^{dly}.) That all their Prayers are a Part of Holy Scripture, and as such are either doctrinal, or directive to all Churches successively to the Worlds End; so that when the Spirit of Prayer does bring upon the Heart any Petition or Supplication, that Holy Men of God have put up in Scripture, this is still within the Province or Precinct of its own Light, and therefore, cannot be called a borrowed Light, but a Renewal of that Light given of old to Holy Men of God, in all their Prayers and Supplications.

3^{dly}, Prayer in the Spirit brings the believing Heart, to a Dependence upon Divine Assistance from above; and that is, both as to Matter and Manner of Prayer: As it is in *Job*, *We know not how to order our Speech before him by Reason of Darknes*. This is in common the Experience of all the Faithful, that are the Followers of Jesus in Faith and Prayer, they find themselves often in Darkness and Deadness of Spirit, and they find that they cannot pray, nor believe aright, but as they have Help from above; they know that what they have in one Duty will not serve in another, without the Renewings of the Holy Ghost in its Beams of Light and Life from above; and therefore, they have their whole Dependence upon the Help that comes from Jesus. And this I have found in my self, that when I have Dependence upon the Spirit of Jesus alone, for Help in Prayer and all other Duties, I am
full

full of Light; but when I have little or no Dependance on him, I am in Darkneſs and Deadneſs of Heart: From whence comes all this Dependance, but from the Spirit of Jeſus; for as we cannot pray without the Spirit, ſo we cannot depend on him without the Spirit. How ſweet, therefore, and full of Grace is that Word, *How much more will your Heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him.* Again,

1o^{thly}, Prayer in the Spirit ſeeks moſt of all, and above all, after the Kingly Office of Chriſt; and that in a twofold Manner. (1^{ſt},) That he may be King alone in its own Heart; that he may reign and govern the whole Soul; that he may dwell in every Faculty of the Soul, and be alone exalted and glorified, and he himſelf alone and not another; this becomes practical in the Heart: For as he trod the Wine-Preſs of God's Wrath alone, and of the People there was none with him, even ſo he does reign alone in the Heart, and there is none with him; and then is that Word of our Lord fulfilled in *John 17. 10. All mine are thine and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.* (2^{dly},) As it ſeeks for the Kingdom of Chriſt, or his Kingly Government ſet up in the Heart, ſo alſo that his Throne, or Spiritual Government, may be univerſal through the World; upon which the Spirit of Prayer doth plead theſe Promiſes at the Throne of Grace, and all theſe Prophecies alſo, that are yet to be fulfilled in theſe latter Days; and all this is to be underſtood by thoſe Words in our Lord's Prayer, *Thy Kingdom come*; and alſo in theſe Words, *Seek firſt the Kingdom of God, and the Righteouſneſs thereof*: That the Kingdoms of this World may become the Kingdoms of our God and of his Chriſt, in a Spiritual and Glorious Manner.

In the laſt Place, upon which I ſhall draw to a Concluſion, Spiritual Prayer, or Prayer in the Graces

Graces of the Spirit, lives upon that hidden Manna, or invisible Fulness that dwells in Jesus, which hidden Manna is some new anointing, or quickening Power of the Holy Ghost, whereby the new Creature, Life, is increased and strengthened, until it comes to its perfect State in Glory. And thus our Lord expounds concerning his *Flesh and Blood*, which whoso eats and drinks of hath eternal Life; and that he dwells in them and they in him; which he clears up in those Words, *It's the Spirit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing*; and that his *Words are Spirit and Life*: All which amounts to this, that there is a hidden Life in Jesus, which spiritual Prayer in Faith doth live in, even those hidden Communications of Light and Life, which flow from him thro' his humane Nature, being near of Kin to us, which the worldly Spirit and Interest feels nothing of, but they which are called, chosen, and faithful. From whence we may note, that Prayer in the Spirit lives not upon the Husks of worldly Comforts; but in the hidden things that are in Jesus. Again, Prayer in Spirit seeks as much after the Breathings of Light by the Spirit into its Soul, as it sees the Need of the Breathings of Faith, Love, Desires, and every other Grace into its Soul; and it is evident, the Spirit that breathes Faith and Love in Prayer, do's also breath Light and Understanding in Prayer. Prayer in the Spirit breaths in its own Light, as well as its own Faith and other Graces, as it cannot live in the Faith of another, so it cannot live in the Light of another; and therefore, Prayer in the Soul is a heavenly Spring of Light and Life in the Soul; and as it is a spiritual Spring of heavenly Breathings after Jesus our Lord in Light and Life, so sometimes the Soul is full of those heavenly Springs more than others; but always in its least Measure, it cannot be stop't or limited to such

such Words, and no more. Can you stop the Bottles of Heaven, that there shall fall so many Drops, and no more? then may you stop the Spirit of Prayer to so many Words, and no more? Can you stop the Waves of the Sea, that they shall go so far, and no further? then you may stop the Spirit of Prayer, that it shall go so far, and no further. Prayer is as a Living Spring of Water in the Soul, that cannot be stop'd, but pours out itself unto the Lord; and, therefore, how often do we find, in Scripture, Prayer called *A Pouring out of the Soul to God*; as we find in *Hannah*, *I have poured out my Soul to the Lord*. And *David* also, *When I consider these things I pour out my Soul in me*. And he speaks the same to others, and exhorts them to *Pour out their Hearts before him*. This then is the true Nature of Prayer, as it is a Spring of Grace in the Heart, pouring out itself unto God. But from hence arises these Objections.

Objection First,

Whether a Form of Prayer ought not to be us'd, in no Case whatsoever?

To which I answer, Take Prayer as one great part of Natural Worship, which every One is bound unto, as a part of that Natural Worship and Homage they ought to give unto God: Now in this Case a Form is needful, and that because all Men naturally are meer Darkness and Blindness, and therefore, they ought to pray by the Light of another, because they want Light in themselves. And this, I humbly conceive, may be one great Reason, why our Lord has left us that Form of Prayer, because all Men, by Nature, want the Light of the Spirit of Prayer; but One may object and say, ought not those who pray by the Spirit, to pray those very Words, and no more? To which I answer, That it is very evident, our Lord never design'd it for a stated Form

to a believing Heart that prays in the Spirit, because he bids us pray often for those Things, that are not express'd in that Prayer tho' they be imply'd: As that he bids us pray for the Spirit. *Pray that your Flight be not in the Winter.* *Pray the Lord to send Labourers into his Harvest:* These and other Places are not expressed, but imply'd; and therefore I have often thought in my Meditation, that our Lord's Prayer may be call'd the Fountain Prayer, so that none can pray for any thing aright, but what is imply'd in that Prayer. And therefore, as it is the Fountain and Fulness of all Prayer, so all the Prayers of the Saints that are in the Spirit, are but Commentaries upon, or Deductions and Consequences, that are drawn from that one Prayer which our Lord has left us. How unaccountable are those Petitions, how numberless are they, that may be found in every one of those six Petitions in our Lord's Prayer? All the Prayers of the Saints that are, have been, or shall be, are included in that one Prayer. There is no Petition or Supplication put up unto the Almighty, whether they be for Nations, Churches, Families, or particular Persons, they are all found in that one Prayer our Lord hath taught us. Whatever Prayers are in the Spirit, whether long or short, more or less time in Prayer, if they conclude with that very Form of Words our Lord has left us, it is but a Repetition of what they have been praying all the time before: For as our Lord's Prayer is the only Platform, Rule, and Direction of all our Prayers, if our Prayers be not answerable and agreeable unto that Prayer in all, and every part of them, it is evident that the Spirit of Jesus is not in us; for as our Lord is the Author of that Prayer, so he gives forth his good Spirit, that helps us to pray answerable and agreeable unto it. And if this be so, that all our Prayers be answerable to that one, it may be called a Fountain of Prayer: And

why so, but because he who is the Author, is the Fountain of Wisdom, even he, who is Wisdom itself, knew how to compose a Prayer in few words, that has all things necessary imply'd in it that is good for Soul or Body; and he alone has a Prerogative and Sovereign Right to institute Prayer and all other Duties: He hath, therefore, instituted this Form as the Pattern, Rule, Direction, and also the Fountain and Fulness of all Prayer, that is needful to be put up to God his Father, and our Father in him; and I know none, that has any Authority but himself to appoint Rules of Worship for his Church, but he himself who is the Lord of his Church. Again, As it is clear, that our Lord has not limited his Church to that very Form he has left us, and as he has exhorted us to pray in other Words himself in many Places, even to his Disciples and Followers did pray in other Words. The Apostle Eph. 3. 3. prays, that their Eyes might be open'd, that they might be fill'd with Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Christ. And Ver. 17. he prays, that Christ may dwell in their Hearts by Faith, that they may be rooted and grounded in Love. And Col. 1. 9. that They might be filled with the Knowledge of his Will in all Wisdom and Spiritual Understanding. And Chap. 2. 2. that Their Hearts might be comforted, being knit together in Love unto all Riches of the Fulness of Understanding, to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. Again, Rom. 15. 13. that God would fill them with all Peace and Joy in believing. Again, in 1 Tim. 2. 2. he exhorts to pray for Kings, and all that are in Authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty. And in 2 Thes. 3. 2. that They might be deliver'd from unreasonable and wicked Men, for all Men have not Faith. And also, That an effectual Door might be open'd, that the Word of the Lord may have free Course, might run and be glorify'd. These, and many other things are

are not expressed in our Lord's Prayer, but yet all these are Prayers in the Spirit, and are necessary Deductions and Consequences imply'd in our Lord's Prayer. Again, When *Peter* was in Prison, did the Church want other Help than what the Spirit did help them with; when they pray'd without Ceasing in the dead time of the Night, and God gave them immediate Answer, in delivering *Peter* unto them from his Prison, Chains, Fetters, and the Iron Gate opening of itself, which was the immediate Fruit, or Answer of the Churches Prayer. From all which it is evident, that the Spirit of the Lord furnishes his Church, and People, with all Prayer suitable to their State and Condition, and also suitable unto the Case and Condition of the Church, Nation, or People, for whom they pray. Thus much for the first Objection.

Second Objection:

Some will object and say, That tho' the Lord did pour out an abundance of his Spirit upon the holy Apostles, and upon the Church then present, it doth not follow, that he gives forth his Spirit now, or pours it forth now, as he did in the Apostles Days.

In this we must carefully distinguish between the Ordinary and the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit; and, therefore, as the Apostles were the Promulgators of the Blessed Gospel, they had the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, which was the Working of Miracles, the Gift of Tongues, and Extraordinary Revelations, whereby to confirm, ratify, and bear Witness to the Veracity and Truth of the Gospel; but as for others, they have but the ordinary Work of the Spirit in their Sanctification, which is for the Subduing of Indwelling Sin, and Working of Faith, Love, and all other Graces in the Soul, whereby they worship, serve, and glorify God in their Spirit, and in their Bodies, which are God's. But if there be no such thing as Sanctification

ation, by the Gift, or Operative Power of the Holy Ghost, what are become of many Promises that God has made to his People, as those, *I will pour forth the Spirit of Grace and Supplication. And I will pour forth my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thy Off-spring.* Again, *I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh.* Again, in the New Testament he doth effect this Promise, *Gal. 4. 7. And because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, whereby ye cry Abba, Father.* Now if there be a Cessation of this Promise, what is become of the Church, or where will you have a Church this Day in the World? You will say, yes, why cannot God have a Church without the Gift of the Spirit? Has not God placed his Vicegerent, or Deputy, in every Heart, which is Conscience, and does not that convince, reprove, instruct, and also guide the Soul? And besides, are not the Scriptures a Light and Guide for Conscience, to keep it in the way it should go? To which I answer, Why is it, that wicked Persons, even all that are given to Wantonness, Swearing, Drunkenness, and every other Sin; that they not only do so, but they go on without Controul, and also glory and rejoyce in it; and why is all this, but because Conscience is quiet, and lies fast asleep in the Breast: For Custom in Sin takes away the Sight and Conscience of Sin. Again, Conscience is not a sufficient Light and Guide, because it neither discovers Miserie in the Soul, nor God's Mercy in Jesus. Again, if Conscience be sufficient, what need is there of the Spirit of Promise to make us God's Children, and why needs the Apostle tell us, that without the Spirit of Christ we are none of his? Let him be Jew or Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond or Free, if he has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his, *Rom. 8. 9.* Again, He tells us, *Ver. 14. that As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.* And *Ver. 13. We through the Spirit mortify the Deeds of the*
-Body;

Body: It follows, therefore, that there is a Necessity for the Pouring forth of the Spirit of Grace and Sanctification, whereby to produce and constitute a Church of Christ, and wherever there is the Spirit of Grace, it becomes a Spirit of Prayer and Supplication. Thus much for the second Objection.

Third Objection.

Is not a Composed Prayer, or stated, limited Word of Prayer, more pleasing and acceptable unto God, and that because for Method's sake, and more regular Performance of that Part of Worship: For God is a God of Order, and therefore, he expects a Regular and Orderly Worship to be performed to him. To which,

I answer, That wherever the Promise of the Grace of Prayer is wanting, there is Room for Argument, for here is Necessity, and Necessity has no Law. But I speak of a Church and People where the Promise is fulfill'd, and wherever it is wrought in the Heart, it begets and creates Prayer in the Heart, it begets Petitions, it creates Supplications and Prayers in the Heart, it forms the Heart, and works up the Heart into a Prayer, it moves strong Desires and Affections after Jesus in Prayer. Again, It carries out the Soul in Prayer according to its measure of Wisdom, Light and Grace, that is placed in the Heart by this Promise. And as such, doth not God accept of his own Work? Is he not well-pleas'd with his own New Creature, *Grace*, in Prayer? Is it not methodical, orderly, and regular in its Worship? Is not the whole Matter of their Prayers in the Spirit of Promise? and as such, God is well-pleased and accepts in the Beloved. Again, Is not this the Practice, and has it not been the Practice of all the Churches of the Saints, to pray with the Spirit, and to pray with Understanding also? Does not the Spirit give Understanding what we ought to pray for? And is not this Praying in the

the Spirit, and with Understanding regular and methodical? Is it not methodical in its Confession of Sin Original or Actual? Is it not regular in its Discovery of God and Christ, of Promises, Precepts and Grace? Is there not something of the Light, Wisdom, and Truth of God in the Heart, where the Spirit and Grace of Prayer is, and shall we charge this with Folly? Is there not a Creature Glory of God in Divine Prayer, in the Acts and Workings of all Grace, and shall we cast a Slur upon it by slighting its Methods and Teaching? This is to slight and neglect, or disesteem the Operation of God, and the greatest, and the most glorious Work of God on this side of Eternity. And there may be three Reasons for this slighting the Work of the Holy Ghost. 1st. In taking the Letter of the Word only, and make that their Rule, without searching into, or finding the Mysteries of Grace and the Kingdom of Christ, that the Word and Spirit would reveal to them. 2^{dly}. They will keep under Nature's Light and Teaching, and hug it in their Bosom, and will not stir a Foot further. 3^{dly}. They read the Scriptures, and read often, it may be, those Places, that reveal and discover the sanctifying Work of the Holy Ghost, but overlook the Necessity of it in their own Souls. So much for the third Objection.

Fourth Objection.

But may not those who are in a spiritual Frame of Heart, be limited to a stated Form of Words? I answer, That whenever there is a spiritual Frame of Heart, there is something of the Spirit of Jesus in that Heart: For by Nature we are at enmity with the Spirit, and hate spiritual things, because we are wholly carnal. Again, Where there is a spiritual Frame of Heart, there is a bowed and broken Heart; the Heart is bowed, and

and melted down in a sense of its own Sin and Nothingness: It is humble, and relenting in sight of its own wretched State of Misery, the reason of Sin; it can say with the Prophet Jeremiah, *My Heart is humbled within me.* And when this is so, Prayer is begotten in the Heart at such a time; I think it is scarce possible, but the Prayer must be created in the Heart, the same Spirit that bows and breaks the Heart, and makes the Heart soft and tender, and of a Heart of Stone to become a Heart of Flesh, the same Spirit begets much Prayer in the Heart. Again, When this spiritual Frame is, tho' it may be small at the beginning, it doth encrease and grow much in a little time, it increases and grows up in Light and Love, it grows up till the Heart is full of all Heavenly Prayer, and fills the Soul with spiritual and heavenly Breathings of Affections and Desires, it sets all Grace at work, and Grace sets Prayer at work, and Prayer fills every Faculty, and every Corner of the Heart with living Movings and Acts of all those heavenly Beams of Light and Life that flow from Jesus. How desirable and lovely, therefore, is a holy and spiritual Frame of Heart, and how shou'd we more seek after it, because it breaks its League with all Creatures, sets the Soul at Liberty from worldly Interests, weans it from all Creature Being, fills it with Comforts and Consolations in Jesus and cou'd freely leave this World to be with Jesus: And thus as it is fill'd with good and heavenly Things of the Spirit, among which it is full of Divine Matter in Prayer; and as such, it cannot be limited to any stated Rule of Prayer, but the whole Scriptures. But to be more particular, wherever the Habit and Workings of a spiritual and holy Frame of Heart is, it must, as I said before, be wholly assigned to the Work of the holy Ghost. It is maintain'd and kept up by the dwelling

wellings Presence of the Holy Ghost, and of all Duties which it walks in. Prayer and Praise are the Element it lives in, and accordingly it begets and forms in the Heart all Variety of Divine Matter of Prayer, as it respects the various working of sanctification. Prayer in the Soul is not always upon one particular thing, but according to that which the Spirit makes Discovery of; sometimes, therefore, it gives a great Discovery of Original Sin, it discovers that Fountain of filthy, unclean Nature, that we bring into the World with us, it discovers that Guilt we have derived from our first Parents; we and the whole World are found guilty, and condemn'd in the first *Adam's* Guilt; we are Branches of him as the Root, Children of him our Parent; and as we are thus guilty in the first *Adam* by Imputation, and also our Natures wholly corrupt, filthy and loathsome in the sight of a Holy and Righteous God: Now the Spirit of Prayer searches into this Original, Filthy State, and makes large Discoveries of it; this is that, which by the working Power of the Holy Ghost, melts down the Heart, and keeps it low, humble, and vile in its own sight all the Days of its Life. Again, As the Spirit of Prayer finds out this Original Guilt and Filth, so it finds out those many Actual Sins, that comes from this Original root of evil Nature, and lays them open in Confession and Bewailing before the Lord in Prayer; and these are two large Fields which the Soul travels in its Way to Jesus. Again, As the Spirit of Prayer discovers both the Root and Branch of Sin, even so it discovers all the Fulness of that Grace that dwells in the Fountain Jesus: Sometimes the Soul makes large Commentaries both of the Person, Grace, and Promises of Jesus, according to the measure of Light given: Sometimes the Soul walks in the Promises, from thence to the Promiser, in whom they are all found, and so in those Graces that

that lead the Soul to center in Jesus, and find only its Rest, Comfort and Satisfaction in him. This then is the Fruit of an holy, humble, and spiritual Frame of Heart, which has the very Substance of Divine Prayer, and not the Shadow only. Thus much for the fourth Objection.

Fifth Objection.

Have we not many good Prayers in Books, that discover all those things you have mention'd, in a better and fuller manner than you have done, and why may we not pray by them?

I answer, That you and I may read all the best Prayers that ever were put in a Book, and continue to read them all our Days, and go to Hell when we have done: This you will say is very rash, but how can it be made good? I answer, it is for want of that Promise made good in our Souls before mentioned, *I will pour out the Spirit of Grace and Supplication.* All our Prayers without this Promise are but as Dung, and will be cast in our Face, and rejected. If we have this Promise in us, we can pray without them; if we want this Promise we cannot pray with them; and why so, but for want of this Promise, all Prayer comes from an un sanctified Heart: It follows, therefore that every true-born Son and Daughter of Zion prays in the Help of this Promise, they pray in the Light, Strength, Faith, and Grace of this Promise that is made good in their Souls. We will suppose one that is full of this Promise in Prayer, and is much enlarged and carried out after God in the Light and Life of this Promise, and one should come to stop him, and say, "Pray you, Sir, leave off this Way of praying, do not pray in this Manner, there are very good Prayers put out, there are Mr. Baxter's Prayers, and other holy Mens, Men of great Light, Men of Renown, and famous in their Day, and the

find him and Sub-ly Men did not design their Prayers for such to whom the Promise is made good; but for those who want it: For to hinder those who have this Promise made good to them, is to oppose the Sovereign Grace of God, and to hinder, or stop the Promise of God, as much as in them lies, that it should not be made good unto them. Again, It is further evident, that all outward Prayers have not Power to reach the Heart, but the Promise has: The Outward Means must be us'd, which is the Word read and preached; these are the Methods of God's Grace, whereby to effect this, and all other Promises; to rest, therefore, in any outward Duty, falls short of the Promise, to go over all outward Prayers cannot search the Heart, and why? but because the Heart is under the Power of Darkness, and in the Depth of Iniquity, and Death; and what? or who can deal with this Heart to humble and change it, but the Almighty Spirit of Jehovah? Who can see into the secret Counsels of the Heart, but the All-seeing Eye of God? Psalm 64 6. The Holy Ghost tells us, *The Heart is deep*: And who can search and find the Depth of the Heart, but the All-searching Spirit of the Lord? Who can find those secret Lustings, that Pride, and secret Atheism, Covetous Desires and Worldliness that lodge therein, none but the mighty Spirit of the Lord? Again, It is said Jeremiah 17. 9. *The Heart is deceitful above all things*; Now who of us can find out the Cunning, Subtilty, Deceit and Hypocrisy of our own Heart, none but the Blessed Spirit? But further, the Heart is not only deceitful, but *desperately wicked*; and who can stop it in its desperate Course of Rebellion against God? Who can curb the stubborn Will? order the roving Affections? regulate

the blind Judgment, but the Power of the Spirit? Who can search the Heart, but he who made it? and therefore he says, *I the Lord, search the Heart.* And how does he search the Heart, but by his Spirit? Again, The Apostle tells us *1 Cor. 2. 10. The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God.* And if so, how much more does it search the deep things of Man's Heart. Again, Solomon tells us *Prov. 20. 27. The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord, searching all the inward Parts of the Belly.* In which we may First observe, That Man's Spirit is God's Candle. Secondly, That God's Candle lightens Man's natural Spirit; for it must be a Candle lighted, or else there can be no searching, a Candle unlighted is wholly in the dark; it must be, therefore, God's super-natural Working in Man's natural, whereby it searches all the secret Workings of the Heart: This makes it evident, that we can do little at this searching of our own Hearts 'till God's Candle lightens our Spirit: And therefore David says *Psalms 139. 23, 24. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* Again, *Lighten mine Eyes, lest I sleep the Sleep of Death.* Again, Elihu tells us, *Job 32. 8. There is a Spirit in Man, but the Inspiration of the Almighty giveth Understanding.* From all this it's clear, that Man's natural Spirit wants Light, Understanding, and Searching, and all this makes Work for Prayer: And this is the first Work of spiritual Prayer, for that Spirit that enlightens and searches the Heart, that same Spirit begets, and works Prayer in the Heart: And all this is a making good that Promise we have been speaking of, *That he will pour out the Spirit of Grace and Supplication.* This therefore, is fulfill'd in those who are enrich'd with the Grace of Prayer, and by this we may try our Christian Profession; Such, then, who lean more upon the outward Words than the inward

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Workings of Prayer, it's a shrewd Sign the Promise is wanting. Again, Where there's a Worship kept up by Prayer, and wants this Promise, one may well cry out, and say, What is become of this Promise of the Lord God of *David*? Has God said he'll pour it out on us, the Seed of the Church in a Gospel-Day, and does he not? Is there a Cessation of this Promise? will the Lord give it forth no more? If so, what a foolish, ignorant People are his Church? But, again, Has not the Lord a People in this World, to whom he makes good this promise? Are there not many thousands in the World, at this Day, that have this Promise made good in their Souls? Do they not pray in the Light, Grace, and Strength of this Promise? Again, If the Lord has put a Stop to the giving forth this Promise, at what Time, or in what Age, or Generation, was there a Withholding, or Stop put to this Promise? In what Time or Age can it be producd, that the Church wanted this Promise, ever since our Lord ascended up into his Glory? Did he not, while on Earth, exhort all to pray for the Spirit, saying, *If ye that are evil, know how to give good things to your Children, how much more will your heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him?* And is not this Promise made to all, in all Ages, indefinitely, that come under the Voice or Call of Grace? Has he not redoubled this Promise more than three or four times in his Gospel by St. John, Chap. 13, and 14. He will send the Spirit which will lead us into all truth, teach us all things, and bring all things in our Remembrance whatsoever he hath said? And if so, then he doth teach, and lead the Soul into all Truth in Prayer. And who is it, that makes and gives this Promise to his People? Is it not God Almighty, even that God that cannot lye? And hath God promised this Spirit of Grace and Prayer, and will he not give it? Hath he spoken, and shall it not come

to pass? Is he a Man that he should lye, or the Son of Man that he should repent? I conclude, therefore, that as this Promise is the whole of the Churches Sanctification, so it's giv'n forth in all Ages of the Church successively to the World's End, and when this Promise ceases to be, the Church will cease to be in this World. So much for the fifth Objection.

Sixth Objection:

Some will say, *Do not you that pretend so much to pray by the Spirit, use much Repetition in your Prayers every Day? Have you not the same Words more than once or twice in one Prayer, and so in every Prayer, do not you use the same Words one Day that you do another, and what is all this but a Form?*

I answer, That Person that prays in the Spirit of Promise, is helped to pray always according to the State, or Frame of his own Heart, and also according to the Condition or State of those for whom he prays; and as such, there may be the same Cause to pray against the same Workings of indwelling Sin and Temptation one Day as there is another, and for the same Mercies one Day as another, in which respect, there may be the same Petitions and Thanksgivings one Day as there are another; but yet they are not, neither can be limited to such very Words and no other, but alter and vary more or less, according to the Light and Teachings of the Spirit of Promise dwelling in them, and helping of them at all times, upon which they have their whole and sole Dependance, and not on any other Words, but what the Spirit helps them with. This answers both the Promise and Experience of the Church, which says, *We know not what to pray for as we ought, but as the Spirit helps our Infirmities.* But to be more particular, we must know, that as every Believer is bound both by Nature and Grace, to pray not only for himself, but for all in general, even the worst of our Enemies

and this daily, in which it's scarce possible, but that there must be some of the same Words in one Prayer, which there is in another, and yet these cannot possibly be call'd a Form, for this reason, because they are the immediate Work of the Spirit, or Prayers perform'd in the Light and Teachings of the Spirit. Again, Prayers in the Spirit may, and do use Repetitions under some heavy Burthen, or Trouble of Soul in extraordinary Cases. Thus it was, when our Lord had the Guilt and Burthen of all our Sins, and was under the heavy Wrath of God, he pray'd in the very same Words three times over, importing the vehement Desires and Breathings of his Soul, that if possible, the Cup might pass; but yet he did wholly submit to the Will of his Father. But one may object, Why did our Lord thus pray, is He not God over all, blessed for ever, and therefore, had he not Power to lay down his Life, and Power to have prevented his Death? To which I answer, Our Lord Jesus, consider'd as God, did not pray, neither had any need of Prayer for any thing; but as he became a Surety and Mediator, he took our Nature upon him, and in that Nature had on him the Guilt of all our Sins, the Father's Wrath, the Curse of the Law, and so became obedient unto Death; it was, therefore, the human Nature pray'd unto the Divine, that if possible, the Cup might pass. But to return, As our Lord did use Repetitions, so did the Apostle Paul, when Temptations were strong, when the Messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him, For this cause I besought the Lord thrice, says he, that it might depart from me; and he said, my Grace is sufficient for thee. And when Daniel set apart some time for Prayer, and Fasting for the Church, in her seventy Years Captivity, when he was earnest in Prayer he repeated the same Words over three times, or more; yet in all these they were neither stated, nor limited, but were helped by

by the Spirit to offer up Prayers and Supplications in these, and all other extraordinary Occasions, as the Matter did require. Again, Secondly, There's not only Repetition of the same Words on Extraordinary Occasions; but also in the Ordinary and General Course of Prayer, as when the Soul is full of the Spirit in Prayer, at such a time it has a deeper Sense of the want of those Blessings it prays for, and as it has a deep sense of want, either of Pardon of Sin, or some peculiar Grace, the Soul is full of Love, Zeal, and Breathings of Desire to receive that Grace, or Blessing pray'd for; in which there may be Repetition of the same Words more than once or twice. And thus we may find in the Prayers of Holy Men of Old in the *Psalms*, and other Places, that tho' their Prayers were the Words of the Holy Ghost, yet there's Repetition in them. But, again, Thirdly, The Prayers of the Saints have much Repetition in them at times, because of the Prevalency of indwelling Corruption, and the want of indwelling Light and quickning Power of Divine Influence, the Saints are not always in a like Frame and Exercise of Spirit, this I find by woful Experience. Sometimes the Soul is full of Light and Love, anon 'tis clog'd up with Darkness and Deadness, and thro' this Working of indwelling Sin, the Spirit of the Lord withdraws his Beams of Light and Life, in a great measure, whereupon the Heart is left to grapple with its own Deadness, and struggle with its own Corruption, in which 'tis forc'd to Repetition against the Bent of its Will and Desire; and all this comes upon it for want of the refreshing Beams of the Holy Ghost, not that ever the Holy Ghost does quite leave the Heart, where it has taken up its full Possession; for the Habit of Light and Truth is still kept alive in the Mind, tho' we thro' an evil Working of Heart in us often grieve that good Spirit,

Spirit, and cause him to withdraw his sensible Presence. Again, As the Absence of Divine Influence causes much Repetition, so 'tis not possible, as I said before, but that there must be some Repetition, even in the best, yea, even in those, who have the greatest measure of the Spirit. But I would here answer an Objection that lyes in the way, Our Lord says, *When you pray, use not vain Repetitions as the Heathen do: And why may not all yours be vain Repetitions?* I shall answer affirmatively, They may then be said to be vain Repetitions, when we think to be heard for the sake of many Words: This our Lord tells us, *They think to be heard for their much Speaking.* 2dly. They may be said to be vain Repetitions, when there's a Dependance on those very Words, or Petitions, we put up in Prayer unto the Almighty: When we think, God will hear us for the sake of our Prayers, as if there were some Worth, Merit, or Desert in our Prayers, or when we have a strong Conceit, that those very Petitions are better than any other we can put up to God in Prayer. 3dly. They may be said to be vain Repetitions, when there's nothing of the sanctifying Work of the Holy Ghost in them, when they come from a filthy, unclean, or unbelieving Heart. 4thly. They may be said to be vain Repetitions, when there's no Conviction of the Original Depravity of our Nature, our Universal Darkness and Impotency, 'till there's a Change by supernatural Operation. 5thly. They may be said to be vain Repetitions, when they are not put up in the Name, and in the Faith of a Mediator: All our Prayers are but as Dung cast in our Faces, except they come unto God in a Mediator, that is out of the Angel's Hand. But I hasten to close the Objection, As the Prayers of Saints, and true Believers cannot be without some Repetition, so neither can they be stated or bounded

in so many Words, is evident, in that the Prayers of the Saints are a Part of those Living Waters, that issue or flow out of a Believer's Heart, as we have it in *John 7. 28.* *He that believes, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of Living Water.* From whence take Notice, that our Lord Jesus makes it the very Essence or Being of Faith, that out of his Belly, or Heart, for the Words are Allegorical, and therefore meant of the Heart, out of which shall flow Rivers of Living Water, where he speaks inclusively of all, and every Believer, as if he should say, "That Man or Woman, let 'em be what, and who they will; he that believes, let him be Jew, or Gentile, Barbarian or Scythian, let him be in what Church, or under what Name, or Profession soever, he that believes, and he alone, out of his Heart shall flow Rivers of Living Water." But you will say, that these Waters are meant in special of the Spirit, or the Graces of the Spirit, in a special manner, shall flow forth. To which I answer, this is very true. I know it to be so, but yet how, and in what way, do those Graces act and exercise themselves, how do they vent themselves, or flow out of the Heart? Do they not flow forth in spiritual Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving, and other holy Duties? This we find practis'd by the Old and New Testament Saints, and Followers of Jesus, when they were full of the Spirit of Grace, they vented themselves either in Prophecy, Prayer, or Praise. And thus 'tis with all Believers and Living Members of Jesus, when they are full of Light, Faith, Love, Peace, and Joy, they break forth in heavenly Praises, Prayers, and Thanksgivings for all Blessings, and this sometimes in Words, but more abundantly in Heart; when the Heart is full of good things, it goes out after him who is invisible, who is the Fountain of all its Grace. From all which 'tis evident, that wherever there are the

the flowings in of the Spirit, there are the flowings out of it also; when the Graces of the Spirit take Possession of the Heart, they vent themselves in holy and heav'nly Exercises: *Our of the Heart shall flow Rivers of Living Water*, this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe shou'd receive; for as yet he was not given, because our Lord Jesus was not yet glorify'd. Thus much for the Sixth Objection.

Seventh Objection.

Do not your Spiritual and Extemporary Prayers become a Form to those that join with you in them?

I answer, This I utterly deny: We will, therefore, enquire what a Form is; and then, whether Prayer in the Spirit be a Form to those that join in them. By a Form I understand two Things, either, 1st. That which is in a Book, and which we make use of continually, without Variation or Alteration, Weeks, Months and Years. Or, 2^{dly}. When we get a Prayer by Heart, or study a Prayer, either of which we get by rote as Children get their first Letters, so when we get a stated Prayer by heart, we keep to the Words of the Prayer wholly, one Year after another without any Alteration. Let the Frame of our Heart be never so bad, the Prayer's the same; or let what Temptations, Lusts, or Corruptions be stirring and moving in the Heart ever so much, the Prayer's the same: It was, whether it touch the Frame and Temper of the Heart or no; this I call a Form. But to answer the Objection, Prayer in the Spirit is no Form, either in itself, or to those who join in it. Can we call that a Form, that proceeds from the Teachings of the Spirit? Can we call that a Form, when we know not what to pray, but as the Spirit helps our Infirmities, and teaches us how, and what to pray; for it is the Spirit that creates Petitions and moves the Affections. Again, when

when any One prays in the Spirit, his Prayers come from a broken, humble, penitent Heart, a Heart that's convinc'd of Sin and Misery by the Spirit, and here's the first Beginning of spiritual Prayer. Wherever our Lord sends his Spirit to convince of Sin there's Work for Prayer. Now according to what Discovery the Spirit makes of Sin Original and Actual, and according to the Sight the Soul has of Jesus, so is his Prayer. All the Prayers, therefore, of true Believers, are in measure, according to what they receive; sometimes more, and greater Light and Conviction, and sometimes less, according to the Gift of the Grace of God giv'n to 'em. This is so far from the Outward Form or Shadow of Prayer, that 'tis the Implantation of Grace in the Heart. Suppose we shou'd go to a Place, where One is at Prayer in the Spirit, in a penitent, humble, melting Frame of Heart, under a deep sense of Sin, and a true sight of Jesus, who implores Pardon of Sin, Peace with God, an-Interest in Jesus, and all this is according to the Light and Working of the Spirit in him, will any sensible Man conclude that he prays by a Form, when he neither knows himself, nor those that joyn with him, what his Prayer is 'till he utter it, which is all from the Light and Teaching of the Spirit; but a Form is known by the constant using of it, in the same words, one Year after another. There is, therefore, generally a great Difference between Prayer in a Form, and Prayer in the Spirit, as Light is one and Darkness in another. Prayer in the Spirit is more secret, and invisible in the Heart, Prayer in the Form is more outward and visible. Thus much for the seventh Objection.

Eighth Objection.

How do we know, but that all our Prayers are from the Invention of our own Hearts, and the Fruit of a large Memory, and Acquir'd Gifts, or Education in Natural Learning

learning? Some Men have notable Inventions and large Capacities, they pray much and speak of good things, and yet are destitute of the Spirit, yea, never knew any thing of it.

I answer, That without doubt many may, and so keep up the Duty of Prayer, who never had his Promise of the Spirit made good unto them. We must, therefore, search, and enquire into the Nature of Prayer in the Spirit, and Prayers of the Natural Man: There is a Positive and Absolute Difference. And, 1st. The Spirit of Promise in Prayer discovers an utter Impossibility of our Apostate, Fallen Nature in the first Adam, to recover itself, or come up into any way of common Salvation by its best Improvements. Nature is wholly destitute of any saving Benefit by the Application of Jesus Christ in his Mediatorial Office, this is no less than the Operative Power and Work of the Holy Ghost. 2^{dly}. Prayers of Nature look after the Outward Acts of Sin, strike at the Branches, make large Confessions of, and Declamations against Sin, yet never go to the Root; but Prayers in the Spirit strike at the Root of Nature's Working: 'Tis the only Work of Grace in Prayer, to let the Sinner see his own Loss, Misery, and Nothingness by rooted Nature, and Life of Original Sin; it sees the Heart to be the Fountain of Lust, Pride and Worldliness, and therefore, cries with David, *Lord, Cleanse me from secret Sins, and keep me from presumptuous Sins, that they may not have Dominion over me.* 3^{dly}. The Prayer of Nature seeks its own Works of Righteousness to cover it from the Wrath of the Almighty, it seeks Happiness in its own Goodness, it's lifted up with any Good it does; and thus Man, by Nature, is both proud and poor, and his Pride so hides his Poverty that he sees it not; God, *I thank thee*, said the Proud Pharisee, *I am not like other Men*; but he saw not he was wretched, filthy, graceless, faithless, and Christless.

less Heart. And thus 'tis with all Men by Nature in their best Prayers. When the Lord speaks of Christ, *I will bring near my Righteousness*, says he *and my Salvation shall not tarry*; says the Proud Man *I bring near my Righteousness into the Court of Justice and it shall not tarry*. The Lord says, *He is well-pleased with his Righteousness*, meaning Christ; and says Proud Man, *I am well-pleased with my Righteousness*: Thus he contends with God, and brings his Righteousness in Competition with God's; but Prayer in the Spirit of Promise takes flight into the Arms of Jesus, to be cover'd with his spotless Righteousness. Prayer in the Spirit convey the Soul with Speed, to shelter itself under the Shadow of Jesus. Thus spiritual Prayer goes out unto another, lives in another, dyes in another, is found in another, even in Jesus, its Lord and Righteousness. Thus much for the eighth Objection.

Ninth Objection.

Some may say, *How do you know, but that your spiritual Prayers may be from a Seducing Spirit, or a Diabolical Spirit; from Lucifer the Son of the Morning, the Angel of Darkness, because he can transform himself into an Angel of Light?*

I answer, that the Spirit of Promise and Grace in Prayer, takes fast hold of every Doctrine of the blessed Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; the Doctrines of the Gospel are the Guide of all Prayer: Faith in Prayer feeds its self, and is nourished in the Doctrines of the Gospel. This therefore, is no Seducing or Diabolical Spirit, when the Soul is carry'd on in Prayer and Faith, according to every Doctrine that the Gospel makes known unto us; but more particular, as the Gospel reveals Jesus Christ to be only precious and desirable, Prayer in the Spirit, moves the Heart to go after him as such. Faith in Prayer sees the Glory of Christ in his Person and Office, and works

to the whole Heart to cleave unto him. Again, the Gospel discovers the Blood of Jesus precious, 'tis the Price of our Redemption, the only pardoning, Justifying, and Saving Blood; upon which Account, Prayer in the Spirit makes out for Jesus for Reception, and Application of it; and without this, there can come no true Blessedness, either of Peace or Eternal Life to our souls; because there wants the Application of that precious Blood, in which is our full Redemption: There is, therefore, absolute Necessity of Prayer in the Spirit for Application of the Blood of Jesus, and wherever there's Prayer in the Grace of Promise there's Faith attending on't; these two are interwoven and mixed together, and 'tis not possible for 'em to be separated in a true Heaven-born Soul. Prayer cannot go without Faith, nor Faith without Prayer, and as they are intermix'd, so they carry on the Soul after Jesus. Faith in Prayer follows hard after him who is invisible, under some heavenly Sights and spiritual Discoveries of him in his Doctrine, and as such, has much intimate Correspondence and free Conversation with him, in every Doctrine of his blessed Gospel. Faith in the Spirit of Prayer, has sweet Conversation with him in the Doctrine of Election, that He should elect and chuse a People, and fix His Love upon 'em, that He should call, redeem, sanctify, and separate a People for Himself, that were no way deserving; but on the contrary, every way deserving everlasting Flames, amongst Devils and Damned Souls. Again, Faith in Prayer converses much with Jesus about His Incarnation, that the Word should be made Flesh, and dwell among us; that He should suffer, become obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross; and all this, is a Fruit of electing Love to His chosen Ones. Again, Faith in Prayer converses often, and much, with Jesus about His Sufferings; it consults the Particulars

Particulars of His doleful Sufferings, it dilates often in a true Sight, and a deep Sense of His suffering in the Garden, in the High-Priest's Hall at *Golgotha*, and upon the Cross, in a Sense in which the Heart is broken, bowed down, and relenting, in a Sense of its own Wickedness and the Guilt of its own Conscience, which was the primary, or material Cause of His suffering. This is the Language of the Soul under such Considerations as these, " 'Twas for my filthy Nature " and my Load of Guilt, and the intolerable " Weight of the Wrath of Almighty God " the Fruit of my Guilt, which caused my Loss " to express these Words, *My Soul is exceeding " sorrowful, even unto Death*; that caused Him " to sweat, as it were, great Drops of Blood falling " to the Earth; His Body mangled, His " Sides pierced, His Hands and Feet nailed to " the Cross, His Blood poured forth, His Soul " made an Offering for Sin, and to cry out " *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me* " Thus a praying Heart in the Holy Ghost, often sweetly views, and contemplates a suffering, dying Jesus. Again, Faith in the Spirit of Prayer converses much with Jesus, about the Worth, and infinite Value of His Precious Blood; it keeps up a great and high Esteem of the Blood of Jesus, as that which brings the Soul near to Jesus, *You that were far off, are made nigh by the Blood of Jesus*; whereupon, the Soul involves itself into the Blood of Jesus, it rolls its self upon it for Pardon, it will take no Peace, what comes by this precious Blood, it shrouds itself in the Fountain of this Blood, it looks upon it as incomparable Blood, ten thousand Worlds are nothing to it; nay, ten thousand Years living in this World, in all the Greatness, Glory, and Splendor, that the World can afford, is nothing but misery, in Comparison of that Life, that is the Fru

this Blood of Jesus. 'Tis not, therefore, without Sense and good Evidence, that a praying heart highly and practically esteems the Blood of Jesus, and may speak out, and say, "How precious is thy Blood, Oh! my Lord, to me, that thus redeems my Soul from Misery, makes Peace in Heaven, Peace in my Breast, and at last, sets me down upon the highest Glory, through thy spotless Obedience performed for me." Such Prayers, therefore, as keep up Faith in the Doctrines of Jesus, are not from a Diabolical Spirit; but from the true Spirit of Jesus. I would answer one Objection here, which is this; *But may there not be a very zealous Profession, and many zealous Prayers, and all may be from a heretical, or seducing Spirit?* I answer, that, without Doubt, there's such a professed People among us at this Day, which fulfils the Word of Prophecy the Apostle Paul tells us, *Peter 2. 1. But there were false Prophets among the people, even as there shall be false Teachers; but how shall we know them? he tells us, they shall bring Damnable Heresies; and what's that? they will deny the Lord that bought them.* May we not wonder, that there should be any such in this Kingdom, who have the clearest Light of the Gospel shining among us, but where the Eye of the Understanding is shut, and covered with Darkness, when is the Gospel hid, and if our Gospel be hid, *it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of those that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel should shine upon them.* But what are those to whom the Gospel's hid, who fall into that Error of denying the Lord that bought them? I answer, such who trust to their inherent Purity, who look alone to that Obedience and Righteousness which they have in themselves, for their Peace with God, and a justified State; therefore they have low and mean Thoughts of the blood of Jesus, they slight and undervalue that precious

precious Blood, as a Thing of no Worth, Merit or Desert, and therein deny the Lord that bought them, and continue under the Guilt and Condemnation of all their Sins, which the wise Man seems directly to point at, when he says, *There is a Generation that are pure in their own Eyes, but they are not washed from their Iniquity.* They think, and conclude themselves to be the only People that God will own; but yet the Guilt of all their Sin remain upon them untaken away. Again, he tells us, there is a Way that seems good unto them, but the End thereof is Death. These are the same with the other, their Works, Words, and Ways seem to be more holy and righteous than others in their own Conceit, but the End thereof is Death. There is another Sort, that make light of and trample under Foot the Blood of Jesus, and, in their Practice deny the Lord that bought them, being Enemies to the Cross of Christ, whose God is their Belly, who glory in their Shame, who mind earthly Things; and yet they will take the Word for their Rule, though it be but in the Letter of it. They will apply such Scriptures as these in their Letter-Sense, *He that believeth, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Now, says the Drunkard, I believe, therefore I shall be saved, because the Word tells me so. Say others, that allow themselves in Cursing, Whoredom, Sabbath-breaking, Worldliness, Covetousness, that make no Conscience of those and other Sins, we believe in Jesus Christ alone and trust alone to the Merits, and precious Blood of Jesus to be saved; not minding, nor searching those other Scriptures, that discover the Sense and Meaning of the Letter. And, therefore, as the Word tells us in one Place, *He that believeth shall be saved;* so it elsewhere discovers the Meaning and gives the true Nature, Life, and Being of Faith in these Places, as that *Faith purifies the heart, overcomes the World, finds Jesus Christ alone precious*

and elsewhere; *He that believes, out of his Belly shall
 flow Rivers of Living Water.* Now, as these are the
 true Nature and Workings of Faith, where they are
 wanting all our Faith is dead, and useless. Such
 Faith as tolerates the Life of indwelling Sin, can
 have no saving Benefit by the Blood of Jesus, be-
 cause there's no Application; and this Truth holds
 good, that unmortify'd Sin is unpardon'd Sin.
 Thus far we may discern these twofold Enemies
 to the Cross of our Lord Jesus; the One by a se-
 ducing Spirit, the Other by evil Nature, put for-
 ward by and prompted on by Satan, who is the
 God of this World. Again, We may know that
 our Prayers are from the Spirit of Jesus, and not
 from a seducing Spirit, when they work out, and
 subdue that rooted Enmity, that is in our Hearts
 against the Nature of God, as he is a holy and
 pure Being; This Enmity is bred in us, and pro-
 pagated in our Nature, as we are in the first *Adam's*
 Fall and Apostacy from God; and as 'tis bred in
 us, 'tis seated in the whole Powers of our Mind
 and Will, and discovers, and vents itself thorow
 the whole Heart, Life, and Actions, in absolute
 Enmity against the Purity and Holiness of God.
 There is, therefore, not only an Aversion, Alie-
 nation, or Estrangedness from Holiness; but an in-
 veterate Malignity and spiteful Enmity against
 the Holiness of God: I speak what I have ever found
 in my own Nature, and observ'd in others, this
 bred Enmity is universal, and is commonly seen
 in others by their flouting or scoffing at Holiness.
 Again, As this inveterate Enmity is against the
 holy Nature of God, even so, it sets itself in Op-
 posing the holy Law of God: We must know,
 that as that God with whom we have to do, is a
 holy, pure and glorious God, yea, *Glorious in Holi-
 ness, Fearful in Praises, Holy in all his Works*, even so
 he has giv'n forth, and exhibited an holy Law,
 that is equivalent and answerable to his Nature,

and bears his Image and Likeness upon it, and such, commands Holiness in every rational Creature, as he saith, *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* Now this inbred Enmity is absolute in standing out against the Holiness of God, and against his holy Law. The Apostle tells us, *Rom. 8. 7. The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, as it is holy, neither indeed can be.* Again, As this Enmity is inveterate against an holy God, and against his holy Law, even so it has a despightful Hatred against the Saints and People of God, who bear the Image of the Holiness of God upon them in some small measure. They bear the Name and Likeness of God upon 'em, and walk as such in the holy Laws and Ways of God. Now where this Enmity remains in the Heart unbroken or unsubdu'd, it breaks out in great Rage and fierce Anger, that reaches up to the Heavens, against the Holiness of God and his People. From whence come all the Outrages, and violent Persecutions against the Church in all Ages, but from this Enmity? From whence come all those Revilings, Scoffings, Reproaches, Slanders, Nick-Names, but from this? From whence come Oppression, Imprisonment, Loss of Goods, Loss of Life, Massacres, Martyrdom, Shedding the Blood of the Saints like Water about the Streets, making no more, or not so much of the Followers of Jesus, than they do of the most brutish and senseless Creatures; but from that rooted Enmity that breaks out in all the Branches of it in Life and Action. From whence came all that Work done of Late, to pull down, to destroy, and burn those Places, where the Church of our Lord assemble, to worship God in the Spirit, to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no Confidence in the Flesh, but from this Enmity? Now if the Worship of these Churches be founded upon infallible Testimony, upon Divine Revelation,

and not the Lord of their Church the Author of every Part of their Worship? Do they not wholly keep to the Apostles Doctrine? Is not every Part of their Doctrine founded upon Divine Authority? for the Doctrine of the Apostles are the Foundation of the Churches Faith. Now if there be any Error in the Foundation, it ruins and destroys the whole Building; for if the Foundation be destroy'd, what can the righteous do. But on the contrary, if all, and every part of their Doctrine be Orthodox, as also the whole of their Obedience be founded upon the Will of God revealed in his Word, then how comes it to pass, that any professing People of the Name of God, and of his only Son Jesus Christ, should molest, persecute, and destroy this Work, and Way of God appointed in his Word, it must come from that inveterate Enmity rooted in the Heart, and put forth into Action, and is called Ezekiel 35. 5. *Perpetual Hatred*, or the Old Hatred stirred up against the Church. And this I take to be the Substance of that Curse, which the Lord brought upon the Seed of the first Adam, as a Punishment of Sin in their fallen State, Gen. 3. 15. where he puts an absolute Difference between the Seed of the Woman, meaning Christ and his Church, and the Seed of the Serpent, the persecuting, bloody Church. *I will put Enmity*, says he, *between thee and the Woman, between her Seed and thy Seed.* This Enmity began first in Cain, who slew his Brother, and this was the first Fruits of that Enmity; and wherefore did he slay him, but because *his own Works were evil*, and *his Brother's Works of Faith and Worship, were pure, sincere, and good*; but of this I have spoke something elsewhere. Now as this Enmity first discover'd itself in Cain, so it continues in all the Serpent's Seed down to this very Day, of which Seed Cain was one. Can we, therefore, at all wonder, why this Seed is so often nibbling at the Church, and

seeking all Means to cut off, and destroy both Root and Branch, that call on the Name of the Lord Jesus in Sincerity and Truth? And is not this very evident at this Day, in pulling down those Places of Worship? But why did they stop here, why did they not destroy, mangle, and burn the Worshippers, as well as their Places of Worship? Was it for want of this Enmity to put forth its Power, I conclude the contrary; it was for want of a Command, nay, half a Command, nay, Liberty, or Leave from Our Blessed, and Gracious Queen, whom God of his Mercy blest with Long Life, a Prosperous Reign as hitherto, and Victory over all her Enemies, both Publick or Private, at Home and Abroad, is my hearty-Prayer and Desire. I come now to answer this Query, Is not this Enmity to be found in the Church, or Spouse of Jesus naturally, and if so, how comes it to be taken away? I answer, Not by any Work or Power of her own, or by any Holiness of her own; but affirmatively, this Enmity is taken away by the Lord of the Church: Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Days of his Flesh, did actually, and fully abolish, slay, and destroy this Enmity, by a twofold Work, performed in his own Person: The first was, in the Day he suffer'd on the Cross; in that Day he destroy'd the Enmity. By the Vertue and Power of his Death, he has overcome the Life, and Work of that Enmity that is placed in the Heart: *Eph. 2. 15. Having abotished in his Flesh, the Enmity, even the Law of Commandments, contained in Ordinances.* From which observe, that this Enmity puts forth itself into a Law and Ordinances, even, a Law of Sin and Death, thro' the Instigation of Satan, and Working Power of that Prince of Darkness in the Mind and Will, in all practical Obedience to evil Works and Ways, both in Heart and Life; I say, it becomes a Law by Satan's Power, and our Practical Obedience to him in

in wicked Works ; and as such, nothing but the Death, the bloody Death of the Cross of our Lord Jesus, could overcome and destroy the Guilt of this Enmity put forth into a Law. And as our Lord did actually slay this Enmity upon the Cross, so in the *second* Place, He does efficaciously and powerfully destroy, and subdue this Enmity, by the indwelling Presence of his Spirit in the Hearts of his chosen Ones, as a blessed Fruit of the Blood of his Cross. This Work is far above the Work of all Creature-Beings in Heav'n or Earth, it's nothing less, than the powerful Voice of the Blood of Jesus can slay this Enmity ; it's nothing less, than the powerful Work of the Spirit of Jesus, that can slay this Enmity in the Heart. And this brings me to the main Work I am upon, that we may assuredly know, that our Prayers are not from a Diabolical Spirit, but from the Spirit of Jesus, when our Prayers strike at, and root up this Enmity out of the Heart. It's the Work of Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, at the Throne of Grace, utterly to slay and overcome this Enmity, and when once the Spirit of Grace in Prayer strikes at the Root of this Enmity, that is against the Power of Holiness, even then, do's the Kingdom of Satan begin to shake, and totter, in that Heart ; for the Kingdom of Satan is propagated and kept up by the Power of this Enmity, against the Holiness of Jesus, and against his holy Ways. Again, when the Spirit of Prayer roots up this Enmity out of the Heart, Satan's Kingdom do's not only begin to shake and totter, but is absolutely overcome and destroyed, and our Lord Jesus enthrones himself within the Heart, in all the Powers of the Soul, and as Lord and King he reigns for ever, even, for ever and ever ; and this is a Fulfilling the Word of the Lord, which says, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Again, He shall be upon the Throne of his Father David ; Or thus, The Lord God shall give*

unto him the Throne of his Father David, and he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no End. In which we may observe that Christ's Church is Christ's Throne. 2dly. That Christ reigns in the intellectual Faculties, or noble Powers of the Soul; he reigns in the Hearts of his Church for ever. 3dly. That wherever Christ reigns in the Hearts of his Church, it specifies and distinguishes his Church from the rest of the World. But to return, As this Enmity is slain by our Lord Jesus in the Souls of his Church, yet by Nature, before Effectual Calling, they have it in them even as others. And so *Paul* and others before Conversion, while under a Covenant of Works, under the Law, how did *Paul* persecute, imprison, and make Havock of the Church, until the Call of the Grace of God reach'd his Heart, and struck him to the Ground. And what a Wonder of Grace and Love was this, that it struck him to the Earth, and not into Hell! This is Mercy indeed. - But now as 'tis destroy'd and slain in the Hearts of his Church, so 'tis chain'd up in the Enemies of the Church, by the governing Power of our Lord, in his Mediatorial Government of the whole World, or else we should have dreadful Work with the Church, yea, there would be no Church at all left in the World in a little time. I have thought sometimes, that when Satan in the Heart of *Cain*, prevail'd to slay *Abel* his Brother, he might well have concluded, "Surely now the Day is my own, my Work is done, the true-born Seed of the Church is slain, and now where will Christ have a Church to bear up his Name, and to worship him in Faith and Love in the Purity of his Word, seeing the righteous Seed is cut off". But behold the Mercy and Grace of God, he raises another Seed, which the Mother of all Living took Notice of, saying in the Spirit of Prophecy, *Gen. 4. 26, 27. God hath given me another Seed instead of Abel*

whom Cain slew; and presently, or in a little time after, 'tis said, *Then began Men to call upon the Name of the Lord*; which was, and is a Token of the true Church. By all that has been said, we may easily perceive when our Prayers are from the Spirit of Jesus in us, and not from the Spirit of Satan, as when our Prayers are led into, and guided by the Doctrines of the Gospel, when they bring our Souls to cleave unto Jesus, make Application of his precious Blood, Righteousness and Grace, and root up that Enmity that's inbred in Nature. Thus much for the Ninth Objection.

Tenth Objection.

Some may object and say, *But do not you that pray extempore, or by the Spirit, find your selves at a Loss many Times? Is not the Heart often dull and dead in Prayer, and wants the Help of the Spirit, both as to his Light, Grace and Teaching, and had not you better at such a Time, take some good Prayer-Book, and read over some of those good Prayers?*

To which I answer, no, in no wise; for I think it scarce possible, for a true-born sanctified Soul, to leave its Dependance on the Spirit, and go to a Form. And to clear this, I would premise these three or four Things, 1st. That wherever there is the least Work, or Measure of Sanctification begun in the Heart, there's a Spirit of Prayer and Supplication along with it; or thus, that a true sanctified Heart, is always attended with the Spirit of Prayer, or 'tis essential to a sanctified Heart, to be a praying Heart: I will not enter into the Criticisms of Divinity in this Matter, concerning the Difference between Sanctification under the first Covenant, and that under the second; because I have elsewhere giv'n some Hints, of the Difference between New-Creature, Grace, in the second Covenant, and that of the first. But I suppose here, a Person un-

der the Work of Grace, under the second Covenant. (2dly,) That wherever there's the Implantation of the Spirit of Grace in the Heart, the Spirit of the Lord never departs, absolutely, from that Heart, although the sensible Beams of Light and Life's withdrawn, yet the Habit of Life, and Principle of the Spirit remains in them, and they cannot sin unto Death, and that because of this Seed of God that remains in them. Upon which Account, *David* prays, Psalm 51. 11. *Lord take not thy holy Spirit from me*: As if he should say, "I have wofully fallen by mine Iniquity, I have sinned greatly through the Prevalency of Temptation and Corruption, yet there's something of thy Spirit in me; Oh! Take not thy holy Spirit from me". But, (3dly,) That though there be the indwelling Presence of the Spirit in a sanctified Heart, yet the Prayers of the Saints are not always alike. Sometimes they are full of Light, Faith, and Love, and other Times clogg'd up with Darkness and Deadness. Sometimes they can say, *My Mountain stands strong, I shall never be moved*; at other Times, *Thou didst hide thy Face, and I was troubled*. Sometimes Temptation and Corruption comes in like a Flood, to over-run the Soul, that we have Need with the Psalmist to cry out, *Lord, when my Soul is overwhelmed within me, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I*. (4thly,) That when the Spirit takes Possession of the Heart, it keeps and preserves Light and Truth there, except it be under the violent Power of a Temptation. There's nothing more evident, than that the most sanctified Heart is oftentimes under great, and pressing Temptations, and sometimes prevailed upon, and overcome by them; yet not so, as to be under the Reign, and Government of Temptations; tho' by the Tyranny of Satan, for a Time, they are under his Buffetings. And thus *Paul* was under the Buffetings of Satan for a Time, and many others

others I could mention at large, as *Noah, Job, David, Solomon, Peter*, those for a time, were prevail'd upon by Temptation, yet not left; because they are under the Grace of Promise, which is given forth under the second Covenant, and fully accomplish'd in every Saint. Upon which Account, their Faith and Prayers are conversant in absolute Promises, this is most evident in the Scriptures of Truth, in Psalm 37. 23, 24. *The Steps of a good Man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his Way: Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds him with his Hand.* And that of the Prophet, *Rejoyce not over me, oh! my Enemy, though I fall, I shall rise again; tho' I walk in Darkness, the Lord will be a Light unto me.* And when Paul was under Satan's Buffetings, says he, 1 Cor. 12. 8. *I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me:* And the Answer the Lord gave is made good to Paul, and every Believer also in the like Case, Ver. 9. *My Grace, says he, is sufficient for thee.* Thus every Saint's preserv'd by Grace, and kept by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation. But to return, as Temptation, and Reminders of Corruption press much upon the Heart, and bear down the Mind, so that the Work of Prayer's much hinder'd and abated, through the Absence and Withdrawment of the Spirit, as to any fresh Beams of Light and Life; and this comes wholly from our selves, in giving Way to a worldly Interest and selfish Heart, and while this worldly Spirit, and Creature-Beings of this World, have any Progress, or Prevalency of working in the Mind, they smother and stifle the things of the Spirit; so that, as the Apostle saith, *We can't do the Things that we would.* But yet, we must know, that the Relicks, or Remains of this worldly Spirit, has no resting-Place, or abiding Life or Pow'r in the Heart, because of a contrary Principle, of the indwelling Habit of the Grace of Life, that works.

works up the Heart into a Light, Life and Liberty, from that earthy Nature or worldly Spirit. And then is this Word of the Lord made good, *When the Enemy comes in like a Flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a Standard against them.* But yet the Remains of this fleshy or earthy Spirit, makes woful and dismal Work in the Heart, in that it obstructs the work of Prayer many Times, it estranges the Heart, carries off the Soul from Jesus, and Things of the Spirit of Jesus. 'Tis this earthy Nature that makes such Varyings in the Frame of the Heart, or Disposition of the Soul, by Reason of which, Prayer becomes very low, weak, and feeble in the Heart. Sometimes it hath scarce either Heart, or Words for God in Prayer. Sometimes many Words, and little Heart. Sometimes much Darkness and Deadness encompass the Soul, this made the Psalmist cry out *Enlighten mine Eyes, lest I sleep the Sleep of Death.* And so often in the 119th Psalm, *Quicken me, O Lord, in thy Way.* At other Times, the indwelling Presence of the Spirit overcomes all earthly Things, looks upon them as Trash, tramples them under Feet, fills the Soul with Light, Faith, and Love, follows swiftly after Jesus, finds him alone precious. And Oh how sweet is the Time, and how sweet's the Duty of Prayer at such Times? how full is the Soul of Prayer! it's full of Prayer, even before the set Time of Prayer, and full of Prayer, and Praise, and Thanks after Prayer; it can say with *David, I give my self unto Prayer;* or I am all Prayer, or all for Prayer. Thus as I said before, the Habit of Life, or Work of Grace in Prayer, doth overflow the Soul, and destroys the living Power of indwelling Sin, and the Corruption of Nature is subdu'd and mortify'd, thro' the Power of indwelling Grace: It's this Life of Grace alone, that gives Liberty from the Bondage of Corruption, for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there's Liberty. This heavenly Spring of divine
Prayer

Prayer, overcomes all Opposition that is in the Heart, by Worldly Power and a Tempting Evil One. But is not this Living Spring of Heavenly Prayer shut up, or dry'd up in the Heart, in Times of great Affliction and Trouble, which distract the Mind and confuse the Soul; that it must say with *Job, I am full of Confusion, see thou to mine Affliction?* To which I answer, that for some time there is little Heart, or little Life in Prayer, and sometimes there is great Indifferency and Backwardness for Prayer, or Carelessness, whether to pray, or no; but yet the Soul cannot live, stay long, or abide long in such a Frame, and that because this Living Spring of spiritual Prayer is not shut up, or lost, so that it cannot be said, that the Soul is ever destitute, or sensual, not having the Spirit, because the Promise of our Lord stands sure, *He will send the Spirit which shall be in them, and abide with them for ever*: For that is a Well of Water springing up to everlasting Life. All which makes good what I have said, that there is no Time, but that the Spirit of Grace keeps up, and preserves Light and Truth in the Heart, and works up the Mind into blessed and glorious Liberty against all Difficulty and Opposition, and 'tis best known by this Living Spring of heavenly or spiritual Prayer. Thus much for the tenth Objection.

Eleventh Objection.

Some may object and say, *But will not the Prayers of Nature bring our Souls into an Estate of Favour with God, or into an Estate of Peace and Reconciliation with him, and is not God well pleased with them?*

I answer, We must consider Man's fallen State in a twofold Capacity: *First*, As it comes under the Improvement, and Walking up to that Light, or Law of Nature, which God hath planted in us rational Creatures; in which, there is some glimmering Sight and Discovery of a Supream, Almighty,

mighty, Infinite Being, the Great Creator and Preserver of all Things : Now according to that Obedience giv'n to the Law of Nature, there's more Light and Knowledge giv'n forth, and Strength also, by which they may oppose Wickedness more and serve God the better ; and as Man's fallen Nature is under some Renewal, and in some measure brought out of that Heathenish and Idolatrous State, whereupon there is in this improved Light of Nature, much Obedience, and Serving God by Prayer and Supplication. *Secondly*, This Obedience to the Law of Nature may encrease, and grow much in the Knowledge of God, by coming under the Revelation of God's Holy Law, giv'n forth by *Moses* at Mount *Sinai*, under which Ministry of the Law, there are many, that, by improved Light serve God Day and Night in Prayers, Thanksgivings and Praises. And now I desire to answer the Objection, that may be made in both these Cases before-named, That all our Prayers, as they come only from Nature's Light, or Nature improved fall under a Covenant of Works, and as such, come short of pleasing God, or of having any lasting Peace or Reconciliation with him. My Reason is this, Because the Word tells us, *Rom. 8. 8. They that are in the flesh cannot please God.* And *Eph. 2. 3. ----- We are by Nature the Children of Wrath, even as others.* The Meaning is, that all the best of our Works we do in our selves by Nature, while unsanctify'd, leave us under a Covenant of Works in which we are no better than Children of Wrath. Again, Who can bring a clean Thing out of that which is unclean, and what is it that makes the Heart clean, but Renewing Grace. Upon all which Accounts we may safely conclude, 1st. That the best Prayers of Nature leave us under the Guilt of Sin, but Prayers in the Grace of Promise get Pardon of Sin, by Application of the Blood of Jesus. Again, Prayers of Nature at the best see

lf, but Prayers in the Spirit seek after Jesus: again, Prayers in the Help of Nature live in self; but Prayers in the Grace of Promise live in Jesus: again, Prayers from the best of Nature live upon their own Righteousness, but Prayers in the Grace of Promise live upon the Righteousness of another, even, upon the Righteousness of Jesus: again, Prayers that flow from Nature's Garden lodge in the Bosom of its self, but Prayers in the Grace of Promise, lodge the Soul in the Bosom of Jesus. Again, Prayers of Nature if we live in them, rest in them, and dye in them, will leave our Souls in outer Darkness, with evil Angels and probrate Sinners, but Prayers in the Grace of Promise will convey our Souls into the Presence-chamber of the Lamb Jesus, and into the Presence of his holy Angels and Saints, made perfect in that Light, Life, and Glory, that's at the right Hand of God for evermore: All which amount to this, that as the best Prayer from reformed Nature as it is in itself falls short of the glory of God, even so all the Prayers under legal Worship do the same, and why so, but for this Reason, because they fall short of Jesus, and that Redemption which is through him alone. Thus much for the eleventh Objection.

Twelfth Objection.

Some others may object and say, *Was not Cornelius in the State of Nature, but yet a reformed and renewed Nature, a devout Man, one that feared God with all his House, gave much Alms, and prayed to God day; whereupon God had a Regard to his Works, and sends him his holy Angel, to tell him, that his Prayers, and his Alms, were come up for a Memorial before God?* From which Words here are two Things to be considered at, here's the Wonder of Nature, and the Wonder of Grace. I have sometimes in my self wonder'd at this Man's Goodness, here was Nature

Nature well improved, in this was the Gift of God, and the Talent bestowed upon him, laid out and improved to a Wonder; but yet all this would not do, all this good improved Light and Teachings of God fell far short of his Glory, and therefore, the Angel must direct him to send for *Peter*, who shall tell the Words, whereby thou and all thy House shall be saved, as *Peter* himself expresseth in the 10th of *Acts*, from which we observe, that it's the sovereign Grace of God alone to call the best improved Nature into a Way of Salvation by Jesus: For what had become of *Cornelius*, if a *Peter*, or some other had not given him an higher and further Call, and that was to come, and believe in Jesus, so that notwithstanding *Cornelius* was one that feared God, gave much Alms, and prayed to God alway, yet he must not stay or dwell there, he must not center, but take up his Rest there; but must go further, must go out of himself, and out of all his own good Works, and count them all as Dung that he may be found in Jesus. And it's observable that the first Beginning of *Peter's* Sermon to *Cornelius* was of Jesus, after he had spoke of moral or legal Righteousness, which God accepts of when they do well, as he said unto *Cain*, If thou doest well, shall thou not be accepted? which was conditionally; but now *Peter* immediately preaches Jesus unto them, the Word, says he, which God sent us to you preaching Peace by Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all; and so goes on, upon which the Word teaches us, that the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word. From which we may observe, that the preaching up of Jesus Christ, and Salvation by him is often attended with the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghost: As it's the whole Substance of the Gospel-Ministry, to teach and preach Jesus Christ, so it's the only Way and Means, by which the Spirit of Jesus is convey'd, and giv'n forth.

to the Hearts of his People. Again, We may further observe, that where there's a good Improvement of the first Call of Nature's Light placed in Conscience, 'tis often follow'd with a second Call of Heav'nly Grace, and Salvation by Jesus Christ. Thus it was with *Cornelius* in his Walking up to Nature's Light, he had a further Light sent him, which was the Ministry of the Gospel, whereby to discover unto him the only way of Salvation by Jesus Christ; for there's no Pardon of Sin, or Peace and Salvation from God, but only by and thro' this Name *Jesus*, our Lord; but in all this we are to consider, that it was not for the sake, nor upon the Account of those good Works done by *Cornelius*, that God sent this higher or further Call of Grace unto him, but for the sake of his own Free Mercy and Good Will: This Call was no other than the Fruit of God's Electing Love, Free Mercy and Everlasting Good Will, from the Days of Eternity: I say again, 'Twas the Fruit and blessed Effect of God's Free Grace, that brought *Cornelius* out of all his best Works of improved Light of Nature, so as not to rest on them, but to come to a *Jesus*, and rest on him alone for Salvation, in a way of Universal Obedience and Gospel Holiness. There's nothing more evident, therefore, than this, that all the good Works of *Cornelius*, that he did in serving God in Prayers, Alms, and other good Works; had no meritorious Worth, value, or Desert in them, so as to obtain the Redemption of his Soul, and the Favour of God, but only *Jesus*, in whom alone is our Redemption thro' his Blood. And therefore, as all our wicked Works are the broad way to Hell, so our best Works fall short of Heaven, if we want Union with, Relation to and Interest in our Lord *Jesus Christ*; yea further, if possible, we could fast, sleep, mourn and pray all our Days, yet if they do not lodge our Souls in the Bosom Love of *Jesus*,

fus, so that we live and dye in him, we shall
 miscarry for ever. All which more fully answer
 the Objection, that the best Prayers of improved
 Nature falls short of Christ, but Prayers in the
 Spirit and Grace of Promise, bring the Soul to
 look unto, and live in Jesus. But further, as all
 the best and good Works of improved Nature are
 no way meritorious of Grace, or deserving, be-
 cause the Almighty Lord as Sovereign of his own
 Grace, acts as Free Agent in giving when, and to
 whom he pleases; and 'tis therefore said *Rom. 9.*
18. He will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy
and whom he will he hardeneth. But now if we ob-
 serve in searching the Scriptures, that amongst the
 various and many ways that God has to bring
 home his own Elect and Chosen, there are three
 two more common; and this is one, that when
 the Talent is improv'd, and when there's a Walk-
 ing up to that Light that's giv'n 'em, God often
 times comes in with Free Grace unto such, and
 this is witnessed by many Texts of Scripture, some
 of which I shall name, as *Psalms 50. 23. To him*
that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Sal-
vation of God; that is Christ, who is God's Salva-
 tion to the Ends of the Earth. Again *Psalms 25.*
14. The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him
and he will shew them his Covenant. That is, he will
 shew them his Covenant of Free Grace and Re-
 demption by Christ. Again, when Peter was speak-
 ing of the Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection of
 Jesus, says he, *We are Witnesses of these Things,* and
 so also is the Holy Ghost, which God hath given to them
 that obey him: So that Obedience sometimes is the
 Way in which Free Grace steps in. Once more
Acts 13. 26. Men and Brethren, Children of the Stock
of Abraham, and whosoever among you that fear
God, to you is the Word of this Salvation sent. This
 is one way of God's bringing home the Vessel
 of Mercy. Again; Other times they are brought

over in the Height of their Rebellion and Wickedness: As *Paul*, by a sudden Voice from Heaven, in the Height of his Persecuting the Church, when the Voice said, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* which blessed Voice prov'd his Conversion, and Salvation by Jesus Christ: So *Manasseth* in his Idolatry and Witchcraft, was taken among Thorns, bound in Chains, and carry'd Captive to *Babylon*, which prov'd the blessed Means of his Conversion. These are some of the Ways of God, wherein he brings home his own Elect, all which is a fuller Witness, that the best Prayers of the improved Light of Nature, as they are not meritorious of Grace that is given forth in the New Covenant, they are not, neither have they that sweet Savour of an acceptable Sacrifice unto God, and all want of a Jesus; but Prayers that are perform'd in the Grace of Promise, have a sweet and heav'nly Savour, as they come up unto God in the Name and Merits of Jesus, that is, out of some Angel's Hand. In a word, Prayers that are perform'd in the best improved and refined Nature, favour of the Old *Adam's* Selfish Love, Self-seeking and Self-Righteousness; but the Prayers that are wrought in the Heart by the Grace of Promise, favour of the second *Adam*, even Jesus, and of his Love, Grace, and Righteousness. Thus much for the twelfth Objection.

Thirteenth Objection.

Others, it may be, will object and say, *But what will become of me, and of all my Prayers? I have pray'd so long, and for so many Years, and yet I fear, they are all no more than improved Nature's Light, with the help of good Education, Reading good Books, or a legal Ministry?*

To which, I answer, That the Improvement of Natural Light with those other Helps, is the way to have a further Help, and that is by super-natural

tural Operation : Wherever there is a good Use made of a little Talent of Light, the Lord gives in a greater, as the Fruit or Blessing upon the lesser ; but in this we are to consider who are without the Spirit, or whether any in this Gospel Day, are without the super-natural Operation, or Gift of the Holy Ghost ? In Answer to which, I must premise three Things, 1st. That the Gospel Dispensation is a divine, or spiritual Dispensation in 2 Cor. 3 Chap. 2^{dly}. Wherever the Ministrations of the Gospel comes, the Spirit of the Lord usually comes with it ; and 'tis therefore call'd *The Kingdom of God*, because of those Gifts of the Holy Ghost, that are given forth under the Ministry of the Gospel. And the Promise of our Lord is made good, which says, *John 16. 7, 8. I will send the Spirit which shall convince the World of Sin, Righteousness, &c.* 3^{dly}. Whosoever they are that want the Spirit, they are none of God's Children. *Rom. 8. 9. If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.* But now I would make way to an Objection, which is, *But who are they that have not the Spirit of Christ ?* I answer, there are three Sorts of People in the World that are without the Spirit, whether consider'd under the Ministry of the Gospel, or not under it. And 1st. All Men by Nature have not the Spirit, as we come into this World and are brought up in our Natural State, we know nothing of God aright, nor the things of God. *For what Man knoweth the things of a Man, saving the Spirit of Man which is in him ? even so the things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God.* 1 Cor. 12. Again, 2^{dly}. Those that give up themselves to a licentious, brutish Life, and yet may live under the Ministry of the Gospel, and have the Movings and Strivings of the Spirit within them, also the Impulses, Struglings, and Injections of it, but yet by giving full Liberty to powerful Lusts and Worldly Pleasures, they thrust out, reject

rample under foot all Convictions and holy Mo-
 tions from having any place in the Heart; for they
 always resist the Holy Ghost, as Stephen told the
 Jews, *As your Fathers did, so do ye*; and as they give
 themselves over to a worldly, or sensual Life, they
 shut out the Spirit from doing any good Work,
 either in or upon them, and make good the Apo-
 cle's Words, *These be they, who separate themselves,*
sensual, not having the Spirit. But, 3dly. A third
 sort that have not the Spirit are such, who are
 under the Power of strong Delusions, and guided
 by that Spirit that comes from the bottomless Pit,
 from those infernal Spirits of Darknes, and are led
 to that Doctrine, that is call'd *The Doctrine of*
Evils, which is a Work of God's spiritual Judg-
 ment upon some, as a Punishment of former he-
 nous Sins, upon which God says, *I will choose their*
delusions, and bring their Fears upon them. And else-
 where, *He shall send them strong Delusions, that they*
should believe a Lye. 2 Thes. 2. 11. But to be more
 positive, As there are those three Sorts that have
 not the Spirit of Jesus, the Objection concerns those
 that are in a good way of improving their Talent
 seeking the Lord in Prayer; but yet may fear
 their Prayers to be from improved Light of Na-
 ture, and not from the Grace of Promise. This
 must be answer'd according to the Light and Teach-
 ing we live under, if we live under a Moral and
 legal Teaching, our Prayers are answerable there-
 to, and we may not see any Want or Necessity
 of the Spirit; but if we live under a higher Light
 of Gospel Revelation, we are in the way of the
 Spirit, to move and work upon our Hearts, for the
 good things of the Spirit are giv'n forth under the
 Ministry of the Gospel: It follows, therefore, that
 we want the Spirit of Promise in Prayer, that
 may hasten unto, and keep in the Way, wherein the
 Spirit is dispensed, conveyed and giv'n forth, which
 is the Ministry of the Gospel. Again, If we want

the Spirit of Promise in Prayer, we should pray much, and pray hard for the Spirit, in a sense of the want of it, and this brings us under the Promise, which our Lord has bid us pray for in Luke 11. 13. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him.* In which take Notice, that we have need of the Spirit, or that we want the help of the Spirit in Prayer, or else why should our Lord exhort us to pray for it; and also, that the Father gives the Spirit in a way of Prayer, in asking, *He will give his Spirit to them that ask him.* Again, As we want the Spirit of Prayer in our Natural State, both to Light and Life, our Lord, therefore, has further promis'd to give it in a way of following him in John 8. 12. *He that follows me shall not walk in Darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.* In which one might reply, "Oh! my Lord, I have had Light from thee all my Days, and Life from thee all my Days, I have had the Light of my bodily Eyes to see, and discern my Way, and to follow my Calling and Business in the World. I have had the Light of my Natural Spirit to discern and know Good from Evil, and to help me to choose the Good, and refuse the Evil. What Light and Life, therefore, wilt thou give me? The Answer is, That as our Lord knows the Secrets of all Hearts, he knows our Impotency, Weakness and Blindness, that tho' we have a little Glimmering Light, yet we want a far more and greater Light, and that because the best improved Light of Nature with all its helps, is but Darkness in comparison of the Light of Grace. The Meaning, therefore is, that as they have a natural Light that is as Darkness, they shall have spiritual Light to remove that Darkness; and as they have spiritual Death by Nature, they shall have spiritual Life by Grace, that is, they shall

have spiritual Light and spiritual Life that is eternal: The Meaning of this Word, *Life*, our Lord interprets, *John 10.* speaking of his *Sheep*, that *hear his Voice, and follow him*, says *Ver. 28. I give unto them Eternal Life.* Upon the whole of what has been said, it follows, that if we have kept up the Duty of Prayer for a long, or short time, and yet want the Spirit or Grace of Promise in Prayer, that we still keep up a Following of Jesus, in those Ways wherein the Spirit is given forth, which are before-mention'd; and as the Apostles did wait at *Jerusalem*, until they were indu'd with the Spirit from on high, so let us wait in God's way, 'till that Promise is made good in us, *I will pour out my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thine Off-spring.* Again, Supposing that we yet want this good Spirit of Promise in Prayer, who knows but the next time we pray the Spirit may be giv'n to us. How little did *Cornelius* think of, or expect this Promise, when he had been at Prayer and Fasting so long, and yet, immediately, on *Peter's* Preaching Jesus Christ, the *Holy Ghost*, even this good Promise, fell upon him, and upon all them that heard the Word: So let us, and all that fear God, keep in the way of Prayer, until the Spirit of Promise be pour'd down upon us from on high. So much for this Objection:

Fourteenth Objection:

Others may object and say, *May not your Prayers that are perform'd by the Spirit, be nothing more but the very Shadow of Prayer without any Substance; Or, may all your spiritual Prayers be as an outward Form, or Figure, that has neither Vertue, Life or Power in it?*

I answer in the affirmative, That 'spiritual, or, tempore Prayers may be no better than Formality, as a Shadow without Substance; for tho' Prayer is one of the Ways of God, wherein he diffuses and conveys Grace into the Heart, yet the Grace of God is not bound up, or limited unto the

Work of Prayer, or any other Duty; for if it were, then all and every Soul that performs the Duty of Prayer, or any other Duty, must needs have Grace: But this common Experience proves the contrary, as for Example, wherever the Grace of Life is planted in the Heart, there is a Performance of every Duty, yet there may be a Performing of all Duties without the least spark of Grace in the Heart, and therefore, all Duties may be as Shadows without Substance, and Prayer one among the rest. But how comes this to be so? That spiritual Prayers are but as a Shadow, or Picture? I answer upon a threefold Account, 1. When the Power of Hypocrisy reigns in the Heart, when a worldly Interest and spiritual Prayer are Friends, join hand in hand, and take part together; this is absolute Hypocrisy. When Self-love and Self-seeking is maintain'd and kept alive with spiritual Prayer; this is dreadful Hypocrisy. There may be a shining Light in spiritual Prayer, and yet the Life and Power of Sin remain in the Heart. It's too common for spiritual Prayer and spiritual Pride, and other Lusts, to dwell together; and all this is from a spiritual Gift of Prayer set up in the intelligible Faculty only, and the Grace of Promise is wanting. But here I would reply, how then is that Divine Sentence of that holy Man of God made good, I mean Mr. Dod, who tells us in his divine Sentences, *That Prayer will make a Man leave off Sinning, or Sin will make a Man leave off Praying?* I answer, That the Meaning of this holy Man is this, that Prayer in the Spirit and Grace of Promise, makes us leave the Life of Sin, that is, Prayer in Faith, Love, and other Graces; but Prayer as a Gift will not. For Instance, who were ever a more praying People than the Pharisees, and yet they kept up the Self-righteousness. And did not Judas pray as well as they, and as much, it may be, as the other Apostles, and yet kept up the Sin of Covetousness. I conclude

clude, therefore, with the wise Man, that the Prayers of the Wicked, or Hypocrite, are Abomination to the Lord, but the Prayers of the Upright are his Delight. Secondly, Spiritual Prayers may be as a Shadow without Substance, from particular Sins of a Church and People. The prevailing Sins of a Church in their Apostacy from God, either in Matters of Worship, or Conversation, make all our Prayers void, empty, and of none Effect, as in *Isaiah 1. 15.* ——— *Thou make many Prayers, yet I will not hear, for your hands are full of Blood.* Again, He complains of their Hypocrisy in *Hosea 7. 14.* *They have not cried unto me with their Heart, when they howled upon their Beds: they assemble themselves for Corn and Wine, &c.* In which we may take Notice, That the Prayers of Hypocritical Churches are but as the Howling of Dogs. Again, When the Judgments of God are irreverent, the Prayers of the Church are but as an empty Shadow, and return void; of which *Jeremiah* complains in the Captivity, *When I cry, and shew unto him he shutteth out my Prayer.* And the Psalmist says, *How long, O Lord, wilt thou be angry against the Prayers of thy People.* Thirdly, Spiritual Prayers of the Church may be as a Shadow without Substance, from the Decays and Declinings in the Grace of Love, or other Graces; this our Lord finds in the Church of *Ephesus*, *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast lost thy first Love; or thou hast abated, or declined in thy first Love:* When the Power of Godliness declines, and grows weak in the Soul, this begets Weaknesses and Indifferencies in Prayer, when Faith, Love, Zeal and Holiness decline, grow weak, and very low in the Heart, then is Prayer weak and low also; and is more outward and visible than internal or invisible, whereupon, there is more Formality, and Custom, more outward Prayer, than any spiritual, vigorous Breathings of Soul after Jesus in Prayer. And as this old Saying is true, That Custom in

Sin, takes away the Conscience of Sin, so there may be a Custom of Prayer kept up, and yet may want the Conscience of Prayer; that is, thro' careless, unconcerned Heart, or Conscience, they are indifferent, whether they have those Mercies they pray for, or no; indifferent whether they have Pardon of Sin, or no; or, whether they have the Graces of Life planted in the Heart, or no; or, whether those Graces, when planted in the Heart, do thrive, prosper, and grow, or no: This is the very Temper of a *Laodicean* Spirit, which our Lord has threaten'd to spew out of his Mouth and that because they were lukewarm, neither cold nor hot; which Lukewarmness, I take, to be a careless, slothful, indifferent Frame of Spirit, and while these Declinings of Grace, or Want of the Power of Godliness remain, it makes all our Prayers to be as a Shadow without Substance, that have no Vertue, Grace, or spiritual Fruits growing upon them. But in this matter some may object. How do those Declinings in Grace and spiritual Prayer stand with the Promise of God, which says *They that are planted in the House of the Lord, shall grow in the Courts of our God, they shall live and bring forth Fruit in Old Age?* I answer, that all the Promises of God in the second Covenant are infallible and are made good for ever: We are, therefore to understand a twofold Growth in the Church of Jesus. 1st. A Growth in the Root of Grace. And 2^{dly}. In the Branches of Grace. Now there may be a Growing downward at the Root in Humiliation, Self-abasement, and Self-abhorrence, when there is not a Growing upward in the Branches, in the lively Actings and Exercise of all other Graces; but yet this is but for a time, in a sudden Fit of strong Temptation, or Corruption, in which time the Soul is under a Cloud, tho' it does not stay long there; where the Habit of New-Creature Life is wrought, there's a thorough-fresh and new

Answer

Anointing of the Holy Ghost, a Working up the Heart into lively Acts and Growth in Grace ; I have thought sometimes, therefore, that Grace is like the Sun, that one while shines forth in great Splendor, but anon is hidden under a Cloud. Again, Grace is like the Sea, whose Waters sometimes overflow the Banks of *Jordan*, but after a little time are gone, and scarcely to be seen ; even so 'tis with the Soul, sometimes full and overflowing with Faith, Love, Joy and Peace, but after a little time 'tis gone, and scarce any to be found ; even thus it is with me, in this I speak my own Heart. But to go on further, If the Prayers of the Church, or spiritual Prayers, may be as a Shadow without Substance, and yet there be a Preservative of the Life of Grace at the Root, that keeps from falling, How comes it to pass, that so many Churches fall away into Formality, Hypocrisy, and at last dwindle away into nothing? What are become of the Twelve Tribes of *Israel*, that were truly covenanted to Jesus? What are become of the seven Churches of *Asia*? And what are become of the Churches of *Corinth*, *Galatia*, *Ephesus*, *Thessalonica*, and others that we find mention'd in Scripture? 'Tis most evident, that in all those Parts of the World, where those Churches did inhabit and were placed, there is scarce the Name of Jesus known among them ; that is to say, neither his Person, Natures, or Offices in Truth ; nor is any other Doctrine, or Way of Salvation made known, or reveal'd unto them. From which we may observe, That no Church in this World is an infallible Guide, for any Soul to build its Salvation upon. Again further, That even Pure, Gospel, Christian Churches may apostatize, fall away, dwindle in their Light and Glory into Hypocrisy and Formality ; and not only so, but into idolatry itself, as the Churches before-mention'd have done. But here I would stop, and give this Caution,

Caution, That no pure Church, while such, can possible fall away; and why so? but because they are built upon the Rock of Ages, the Lord of Glory, I say, they are built on him by Free Promise and Absolute Grace, as it is exhibited and given forth in the second Covenant; whereby they are preserv'd, and kept by the Power of God, thro' Faith unto Salvation; and also our Lord's Promise stands sure, that as the Church is built upon himself, the Rock; the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it: But yet I say, that in a Succession of Ages, or in After Generations, some enormous Corruptions may creep into Gospel Churches, and also some pernicious Doctrines and wicked Principles may spring up, and prevail so far, that in time they fall away, and come to Ruin; and that Church, that is call'd *The House of Prayer*, may then become *A Den of Thieves*; even thus it is at this Day with the Twelve Tribes of *Israel* dispers'd abroad, and also all the fore-named Churches. But how comes it to pass, and what's the Reason, that Churches may thus apostatize, and fall away? I answer, we must distinguish between Church and Church, that is, between those that are capable, or liable to apostatize and fall away, and those that are not; and this will appear by those Reasons I shall give, for so many Churches thus apostatizing. The grand or principal Reason of this Falling away, as I humbly conceive, is their dwelling securely under a Covenant of Works, they rest in the Law, and make their Boast of God. Thus it was with *Israel* after the Flesh, they sought Righteousness by the Works of the Law, and stumbled at the Rock of Ages: And thus the Church of *Galatia* was leaning upon a Covenant of Works, whereupon the Apostle *Paul* was in doubt of them, and fear'd, lest he had bestow'd upon them Labour in vain. It's no wonder, therefore, that so many Churches fall, because they are under a Covenant

Works, so all their Principles are mutable, fickle and uncertain, changeable and liable every Moment to give back, and turn aside by every Temptation or Opposition. Again, This is further evidenc'd by those who have Retribution, or great Gifts of the Spirit, but yet have nothing else in Truth but Gifts; tho' there is some Shadow or Remembrance of Grace, something of Holiness, are yet under the first Covenant; so also of Faith, Love, Hope, Joy, Peace and other Graces, but not in reality; there may want Truth in the inward Parts, and Sincerity at the Bottom: And as it is with particular Members, so with Churches; how often have we seen, and heard of flourishing Members, growing mightily in Gifts of Light, and seemingly in Grace, but yet have wofully fallen away, and come to nothing; all which is Cause of Mourning, even so it is with those particular Churches before-named, among all which there is no Throne of Glory for our Lord to walk, dwell, or inhabit at this Day; and all this is the Fruit of our Abiding and Walking in the Light and Truth of the first Covenant, and Adhering unto the slippery Principles of improved Nature, or rather living in the Gifts of the Spirit as given forth under the Ministry of the Word, but yet Self is maintain'd and kept alive, and Christ the Lord of Glory is thrust out of the Heart, and very little esteem'd; and while we are in this Condition, we are liable on every Blast of Temptation, to make shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, and not only fall away for a Time, but Finally, and forever. Upon all that has been said in this Matter, it is very clear, that the Prayers of the Church, or Prayers *Ex tempore*, and by the Spirit, may be no more than a Shadow without Substance, or a Picture without Life and Vertue, and as such, may fall away Finally. What Cause, then, have all, and every Church of Jesus, to seek, and follow hard after

after the Substance, and not rest in the Shadow to get into Jesus, the Substance of all Divine Life and to grow up in him. Again, Not to stay, or rest in the first Covenant, but hasten into the second, which is the new and everlasting Covenant in which Christ is *All in All*. And as the House of Jesus is the House of Prayer, so let us labour that our Prayers may have Substance, Life, and Power in them, kept up in the Power of Godliness, that may witness for us, that we are the House and Spouse of Jesus Christ. To conclude therefore, wherever Prayer is perform'd in the Grace of Promise, there's the Substance and Life of every particular Grace; but wherever Prayer is perform'd in the Gift and Light of the Spirit only, without effectual Grace, they are but as a Shadow, empty, airy and notional. So much for the fourteenth, and last Objection.

Having thus far gone in my poor little measure to answer those Objections, some of which I have had put to me, at Times, for above five and twenty Years, and others I have rais'd in my own Breast.

I come now, to give some Evidence, or, a short Witness of Prayer in the Spirit; or, Prayer in the Grace of Promise; in which, I desire to speak my own Experience, and track my own Heart in that which I have found in this Matter, if my own Heart deceive me not; and I desire to ground all I have to say on these Words in *Jude v. 20* *building up your selves in your most holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.* In which we may consider that as there are different Gifts and Operations by one and the self same Spirit, this of Prayer is one, in special, or in a peculiar Manner, given forth unto the Church. It's the Church, and the Church alone, that prays in the Holy Ghost; but what's the Meaning of these Words *Praying in the Holy Ghost*? I answer, that we are to understand

the Word speaks inclusively, that's not only of a Gift of Prayer, a Gift of Light set up by the Spirit in Prayer, but also all those blessed Graces, that the Holy Ghost is the Author, Parent, and Worker of in the New-Covenant Heart; and is the Fruit of that spiritual Life that's planted here. But to be more particular,

First, Prayer in the Holy Ghost, or in the Graces of the Holy Ghost, flows from a true Sight and a deep Sense, both of the Load of Guilt, and also of the loathsome, filthy, and evil Nature of Sin: Then is that Word of the Lord fulfilled, *Then shall ye remember your Ways, and your Doings, which are not good, and ye shall loath yourselves in your own Sight for all your Iniquities and for all your Abominations*, Ezek. 36. 31. They shall lo it, they shall loath themselves, but why so? answer, it's no less, nor it's no other than the Holy Ghost, that puts them upon this Work; this is far above, and beyond the Light, Power or Work of Nature, or any common Gift, or more outward Gift of the Spirit; it's the Work of Grace. What was it, that made David cry out, Psalm 51. 5. *Behold I was shapen in Sin, and in Iniquity hath my Mother conceived me*; it was the working Power of the Holy Ghost, and therefore, he prays, Ver. 11. *Lord, take not thy holy Spirit from me*. What was it made the Apostle cry out, Rom. 7. 24. *Oh! Wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death?* This was no other than the Work of Grace, as if he should say, "I am one of the most loathsome, and wretched Creatures that lives, in my self, I have a Load of Guilt upon me, and I am all over Filth, so that I am nothing else but Guilt, and Filth, without a Jesus, and shall be so for ever without him". Again, what was it made David cry out, *My Loins are filled with a loathsome Disease*. All this was from the working of the Spirit in them.

Secondly,

Secondly, Prayer in the Holy Ghost under the sense of the Weight of Guilt, and loathsome Nature of Sin, makes out, and seeks after the Lord Jesus, for Pardon and Grace: And this makes good that Word of our Lord, *Come unto me and you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.* Mat. 11. 28. Herein is the true Nature of godly Sorrow, that works Repentance unto Life, never to be repented of: This is called godly Sorrow, or, *Sorrow after a godly Sort*; that is, sorrows after God in Jesus, to be deliver'd from the Life and evil Nature of Sin; as it finds no Peace in Sin, so it finds no Peace, nor Rest, but in Jesus; the Soul, the living and immortal Soul, can find no Rest, until it come to Jesus, until it come to believe, and live in him alone for Rest, or else why does our Lord bid us, *Come unto him, and we shall find Rest to our Souls.* These Words, *You shall find Rest*, is better than ten thousand Worlds to a penitent, broken, believing Heart, under a Sense of the Guilt of Sin, and the Wrath of God. Again, can Riches, Crowns, Kingdoms, or all the Glory of this World, give Rest unto the Soul, no they cannot, but our Lord Jesus can, does, and will give Rest to every Soul, that comes, and seeks, and follows him alone for Peace and Rest. Oh! then, let us come unto him alone for Rest, whose Peace and Rest is lasting; yea, everlasting. Well might David cry out, *Therefore, return unto thy Rest, O my Soul!* for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. And he exhorts us, *To rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him*; that is, Rest in him by Faith, Love, Hope, Desire, and Breathings of Soul after him. Now all these Things make it more full and evident, that Prayer in the Holy Ghost, is a seeking after, and resting in the Lord Jesus Christ. Prayer in the Holy Ghost moves the Heart to seek after a Jesus alone, it stirs the whole Heart to seek, cry, hunger, thirst, breath, desire, and follow

follow hard after Jesus. Was it *Rachel's Cry*, Give
 me Children, or else I die? But, Oh! how much
 more, does a seeking Soul cry out, Oh! give me
 Christ, or else I die. I do not only dye the Death
 of Nature, but I dye a spiritual, eternal, ever-
 lasting Death: Thus the praying Heart in the Holy
 Ghost seeks Jesus. And further, it does not only
 seek Jesus for Pardon and Rest, eternal Rest; but
 it seeks Jesus for the Grace of Life, it does
 with Hypocrites seek Salvation from Hell by Jesus;
 but it seeks Salvation from the Life, and Pow-
 er of indwelling Sin by Jesus; they seek a Jesus
 to dwell in them, to live, reign, and rule in
 them, as Lord and King. We are, therefore, to
 take Notice, that our Lord Jesus is King, in a
 peculiar Manner, unto his Church. 2dly, As he's
 King, so he has a Kingdom; but what's that? or
 who are they of his Kingdom? I answer, 'tis his
 Church, it's them alone, that are the Subjects of
 his Kingdom: It's those alone that pray in the
 Holy Ghost for his Kingdom, they pray that those
 petitions may be fulfilled, that he himself has
 bid us pray, *Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom*
come; And so on. But what's the Meaning of
 this, *Let thy Name be hallowed*, that is, let thy
 Name be made known, revealed, and manifested
 in the World; or let thy Name be made glorious,
 and highly exalted in the Earth. For how excellent,
 says the Psalmist, *is thy Name in all the Earth*. A-
 gain, *Thy Kingdom come*, this is very comprehensive,
 I shall speak but little as it falls in my Way, *Thy*
Kingdom come, that is, "Oh! my Lord, let thy
 Kingdom come into my Heart, be thou my
 Lord alone, and King alone in my Soul; let
 there be none with thee in my Heart, but thy
 self alone; as thou bore the Father's Wrath al-
 one, so be thou my Lord alone; let no Devil
 keep my Heart from thee, or have any Place
 in my Heart; let no World, or any cursed Lust
 stay

" stay my Heart, or inhabit in my Soul; let
 " nothing in Heaven or Earth be able to keep
 " my Soul from thee, or set me at a Distance
 " from thee". For this you must know, that
 the Throne of Christ's Glory is the Hearts of his
 People, for he lives in them, and they in him.
 Again, *Thy Kingdom come.* " Oh! my Lord, let
 " thy Kingdom come more into this World; let
 " it spread, prosper, and prevail more; let the
 " Grace take fast hold of every Sinner's Heart
 " to bring him wholly unto thee; that all and
 " every Word of Promise may be fulfilled, and
 " every Word of Prophecy accomplished; that the
 " Romish, Scarlet Whoredom, and Idolatry, may
 " be utterly crush'd, and rooted out of the
 " World; that the Kingdoms of this World may
 " be the Lord's, and his Christ's". For you must
 know, that as our Lord is King, and has a King-
 dom, it must needs follow, that all the Enemies
 of him and his Kingdom, he will dash in pieces like
 a Potter's Vessel in the Day of his Wrath, when the
 Lamb shall be turn'd into a Lion, when he shall
 say, *Bring those mine Enemies, that would not that I
 should reign over them, and slay them before me.* These
 are some parts of the Church's Prayers in the Holy
 Ghost, they do not only pray for Pardon, Peace,
 and Grace for themselves, but that Effectual Grace
 may be Universal, and all Iniquity may stop its Mouth.
 But now as the Prayers of the Saints in the Holy
 Ghost, do seek, follow, look unto, and travel after
 Jesus, and involve the Soul into the Love, and
 Likeness of Jesus, this Objection arises, but in
 the lofty, and conceited Professor, *Pray what need
 all this ado about seeking of, and following Jesus?*
 my part; I pray often, and may be, as much as you, and
 believe in Jesus, that he dy'd for my Sins, and I shall
 saved by him, for I keep close to my Church, and to
 Prayers and Sacraments, and live a good, honest, sober
 Life, and give to the Poor, and do Justice to all.

urs, and therefore, I think my Case very good, and my
 fit for Heav'n, and what need, then, is there of
 eking, Crying, and Looking to Jesus so much? I answer,
 at this is all good, but to stop, or stay here, is
 destroy the whole Frame of the New Creation,
 New-Creature-Life, it overthrows the whole Fa-
 ick of Divine Life, for the New-Creature-Life
 depends wholly upon following of Jesus, and cleav-
 g to him as its only Object, and Fountain of Life:
 s as natural for the Prayers of Believers to seek
 us, as the New-born Child to seek the Breast;
 Prayer is the most frequent Act of the Soul's
 avel after Jesus, so the Heart and Eye of a Be-
 ver is mostly after him who is invisible, in whom
 all its Light and Life. But I go on,

Thirdly, Prayer in the Holy Ghost does ever exalt
 Lord Jesus in the Heart, both in his Person and
 ices. Prayer in the Spirit ever exalts him as
 d and King, as Prophet and Priest; he is won-
 ful, he is mavelous and greatly esteem'd in a
 ying Heart, this is practical, 'tis not a Flash; or
 , and is gone, but as I said, 'tis practical. A
 ying Heart in the Spirit keeps up an high Esteem
 Jesus, and greatly prizes him, not like the poor
 nd Jews, who sold him for thirty Pieces of Silver,
 whom 'tis said, *A goodly Price that I was priz'd at by*
 ; but a Believer finds in his own Soul that *He is*
 ions, *the Chief of Ten Thousand, and altogether lovely,*
 as he is most glorious and precious in him-
 so in all that he has done for us, and works
 us. And indeed, this Work of Jesus in us is
 t desirable, because it is the sweetest Part of a
 ever's Life. What Life is like the sensible, in-
 elling Presence of Jesus in us? This is some-
 es a little Heav'n upon Earth. And this brings
 to the next Thing.

Fourthly, Prayer in the Holy Ghost gets much Ad-
 vantage with God in and through the Lord Jesus;
 the Lord speaks to the Heart by his Spirit in

a Mediator Jesus, so the Soul speaks in Prayer unto God in a Mediator Jesus. Upon which Account in the Covenant of Redemption, there is sweet Converse and Intercourse of Communion between a Holy God and a fallen Creature. Hence the Prayer in the Holy Ghost renews and increaseth Acquaintance with God and Enjoyment of him; there is a Growing up in Grace so in Communion through some sensible Actings and Exercise of particular Graces, whereby the Soul has more Intimacy and Freedom at the Throne of Grace through Jesus, and also more sweet Converse and Familiarity with God; at such times, there is Plenty and Fulness of Goodness flowing into the Heart from the Fountain of Love, which fills the Soul with the heavenly and spiritual good things of Grace; there is Light springing up in the Soul, Faith, Love, Peace and Joy, and the Soul flows forth in Exercise of those Graces after him who is the Fountain of them; and this makes good that Word *Psalms 97. 11. Light is sown for the righteous, and Gladness for the upright in Heart.* And also *Psalms 112. Unto the upright there ariseth Light in the Darkness.* And the Apostle to the Romans prays for these things *The Lord fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing that you may abound in hope thro' the Power of the Holy Ghost.* Now can we think this Prayer was lost, or of no use, did the Apostle pray in vain for these things, far be it from us to think so. The Church therefore, and Followers of the Lamb, at times find those things; they are sometimes ravish'd with Love in Prayer, are full of Joy, Peace, Delight and Comfort in Jesus, they are full of the Glory of God as Creatures, and Oh! how sweet is the thought sometimes, that they are some of those Refreshings the Holy Ghost speaks of in *Acts*, when he exhorts them *To repent and be converted, saying when the times of Refreshing shall come from the Father*

of the Lord. From whence observe, That there is Refreshing from the Presence of the Lord, and tho' it may refer to the second Coming of Christ, which will be a perfect Refreshing from all Sorrow, Trouble and Molestation, yet not exclusive of the time of Life here. There are Times of Refreshing here given forth in this Life, from the Presence of the Lord, as a Fruit and Blessing that flows into the Soul upon its Repentance and Conversion, which many of the Saints and Followers of Jesus feel and experience. But I hasten,

Fifthly, Prayer in the Graces of the Holy Ghost, is most solicitous and concerned for two things in Jesus our Lord, one of which I think, the Hypocrite is not much solicitous after, they are these, Imputation and Communication: Herein is a great Part of the Soul's Prayer in the Holy Ghost after Jesus. The true Believer travels betwixt Imperfection within him, and Perfection without him, he looks into himself, and sees nothing but Imperfection; he looks unto Jesus, and sees all Perfection; and therefore, he looks wholly unto and lives solely upon Jesus for Righteousness; even, a perfect Righteousness without him, to justify and clear him in the Court of Justice, and a Righteousness within him to sanctify him. Prayer in the Spirit, therefore, seeks after spiritual Blessings, it follows hard after the things of the Spirit, and walks in them; it seeks after inward Holiness as it does after Happiness. Again, It receives all the Incomes and Flowings of the Spirit with Comfort and Joy into its Heart to sanctify, as it does the Righteousness of Jesus into its Faith to justify: This is not grateful to an Hypocrite, who seeks, loves and desires a Righteousness without to justify, more than Righteousness within to sanctify.

Sixthly, Prayer in the Holy Ghost ever seeks to be found in Jesus at all Times, every Minute of its life it shrouds the Soul under the Shadow of Jesus,

it seeks to be deliver'd from its own filthy Rage of Righteousness, 'tis afraid of Self-Righteousness as well as Self-Wickedness, it often says, "Oh! Lord, deliver me from my righteous self, and from my wicked self; and makes what the Apostle says practical, *I count all things but Loss and Dunc for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ, and that I may be found in him, &c.* Thus Prayer in the Spirit carries the Soul out of all to Jesus.

Seventhly, and Lastly, Prayer in the Grace of the Holy Ghost ever holds out, and holds on in seeking Jesus sincerely and perseveringly; *He that endures to the end, the same shall be sav'd.* Prayer, therefore, in the Spirit, as it is the first in New-Creature Life, so it is commonly the last; the Proto-Martyr Stephen in his last Words resigns his Soul to Jesus, *Lord Jesus, Receive my Spirit,* says he; and what more weighty or pathological Prayer cou'd Stephen offer unto God than this; as if he should say, "O my Lord Jesus, I give my Soul to thee, and well I may, for who else should I give it to? Hast not thou, O my dear Jesus, hast not thou, O my sweet, precious, lovely, and only desirable, and lovely Jesus, giv'n thy self for me," and therefore, I give my self to thee? Hast not thou offer'd up thy very Soul and Body for me, therefore I give my Soul to thee? Hast thou not stood in the Gap to assuage the Father's Wrath and to keep off that Wrath from me, and therefore I give my Spirit to thee? Again, Did not thou, O my precious Lord, give thy precious Blood for me, and offer it up in Sacrifice unto God the Father for me; and is not this thy most precious Blood the very Price of my Soul, my Soul's Ransom and full Redemption; and therefore, I give my Soul to thee? O how precious is thy Blood, O my Lord, to me! how incomparable! how incomparable is it! O what Earth, nay, what is Heaven to me without thee

"self, O my Lord, in thy Garments dy'd with
"Blood for me; and therefore, I give my Soul to
"thee, O Lovely Jesus, receive my Spirit". Even
thus the Souls of those who are Seekers of Jesus
in Spirit, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes,
they hold on from first to last in seeking Jesus;
they seek him in all Conditions, Afflictions and
Temptations, in Sorrows and Troubles, in Com-
forts and Crosses, tho' not without Stops, Letts and
Hindrances, thro' a tempting Devil and a corrupt
Heart; but in the Name, Help and Grace of Jesus
we shall overcome all, and hold on 'till Death:
And the Lord grant, that every one of you, my
Brothers and Sisters at Cocker-mouth, in our Lord Je-
sus, may be found the true Seekers of Him, which
is all from One of the worst and meanest Bro-
thers in our Lord Jesus.

R. D.

*An Epistle to all, and every Member of that
Church of Christ in New-Street, London;
wishing all Mercy, Peace and Life for ever.*

THE principal and only Occasion of the fol-
lowing Discourse, is from some Conference
I had with some of our Members about those un-
happy Divisions, Rents and Breakings off of some
in the Church; whereupon, my Thoughts were
much at Work, and after some time I set my Pen
to Work, designing to contract my Thoughts in a
sheet of Paper, and send it in Manuscript to those
concerned, but finding my Meditations so large,
I could not tell where to break off, yet not think-
ing it worthy of the Press, neither do I now, nor
did I design to make it publick at first, but after
more Consideration, I thought it would be of little
or no Use to lye in Manuscript, whereupon I did

expose it, and did not do it without Encouragement from some of the Learned, and I hope, I design the Glory of God, the Help of the weak, and Confirming the strong, and for my own Use and Profit the little time I have to breath: There are other Reasons which I shall not mention here, because it takes up too much time in the Preamble; and therefore, I long to be at the main Work, and that is, to give my Opinion of what may be the chief Cause of Members breaking their Church-Relation, even whilst the Church retains her Purity; It must be certainly for want of practical Light, Faith and Love: Not that I conclude all those to be without the Essential Being of those Graces, and of their being in active Life and Motion; for sometimes they may be so weak and low that they can't be discern'd, yet not always; but they may be, and are discernable in the Practice of Obedience by their Life and Motion; and if so, what need have you and I to enquire into our selves, whether we have those Graces in us or no, especially, if we alter our Course, change our Profession, or forsake one Church to settle our selves in another, while there is no real Conviction.

But to proceed, I shall lay down this as a Living or Standing Principle concerning Grace, and that is,

First, That the Holy Ghost is the sole Author, or Worker of all Grace.

Secondly, That there is a sweet Harmony and Correspondence between one Grace and another, and tho' I do but mention Light, Faith and Love, yet wherever these are, there is every other Grace and Vertue that attends the New-Creature Life. But,

Thirdly, I would premise this, that Faith and Love do not always attend, or are produc'd by the Intelligible or Directive Faculty; I mean, by the Light that is set up in the Understanding, and that because there may be great Light set up in

the Understanding, when there is nothing but Perverseness and Rebellion in the Will and Affections, but yet from that Light set up there may be a kind of Faith and Love, and yet fall far short of Sincerity, or a real Closing with Jesus; for take even Divine Faith in its bare Name, and 'tis the Assent of the Understanding to something proposed as good, and to be desir'd; and as for Love, 'tis the intense Act of the Will going out after some apprehended good; now in both these there may be a Coming short upon a double Account, sometimes it is for Want of a further Light, and sometimes in Opposing and Obstructing that Light that is reveal'd; and therefore, tho' some have said, that the Kingdom of Christ is set up in the practical judgment, yet to me it seems to want a great Light to understand, and give forth the right Meaning, or else we may run our selves upon the Sand, and that because there may be a practical Obedience, flowing from a Light that leads no further than a Covenant of Works, and the Reason of this sometimes is, by Living under a Letter-Ministry, which leads no higher than the Letter of the Word, and so it is no more than a Letter-Obedience to the Law and Gospel, which is still no more than Works, or Works and Faith mixed together in Matters of Eternal Life, and all this while that selfish Power and selfish Love is maintain'd and kept alive in the Soul, and this is the only thing that keeps Christ and the Soul asunder, and indeed, this is too common with those that live under a higher, and more-Gospel Ministry, and it is evident, that such a Ministry is attended with the Gifts of the Spirit, now where there are Gifts, and nothing but Gifts, there is a selfish Power kept alive in the Heart; and thus it is in all the Progress of Obedience in all things that are done, for the Gifts of the Spirit and self are interwoven and mixed together, and so they carry

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on the Designs of Self, that is, Self-Love, Self-Seeking, Self-Glory, and 'tis as possible to make a new World, as to get out of a selfish Power, without the Efficacy and Power of discriminating and efficacious Grace.

And now I come to that which is the only Thing needful, and that is, to know how this Light, Faith and Love, differ from that which is more common, which is airy, empty and fruitless.

First, then, That Light that is efficacious, is given forth in the second Covenant Promise, and so it becomes a Beam of the Glory of God in Christ, or the first Glory that shines in upon the Soul in the second Creation; for as Light was the first thing in the first World, even so Light is the first thing in the second World of Grace; and then Faith and Love are usher'd in with this Light, and all these flow upon the Soul in Effectual Calling, and one cannot be without the other; for Light is first and præ-requisite, and antecedent, and is in Order of Nature before Faith and Love, but all flow in upon the Internal Call, or Voice of Christ upon the Heart, and then it is, that the *Dead Soul hears the Voice of the Son of God, and lives*; it lives in that Light, Faith, and Love, which is in Jesus.

And now, As to their Travel, Fruit, and Blessed Improvement, or Exercise: First then, Love and Faith going along with its Light, is that which brings down all Self-seeking, and Self-Righteousness unto Death, and so becomes *Buried with him by Baptism*, which must be by the indwelling Presence of the Holy Ghost, because no outward thing can do it; it must be that Part of Sanctification by the Power of Faith and Love in the Spirit, that overcomes both righteous and sinful self.

Again, Faith and Love in their spiritual Travel get the Victory over the World, and conveys the Soul out of all Creature Beings into those
heav'nly

heav'nly Places in Jesus; Faith and Love cannot live upon worldly Things, but upon spiritual Objects; they are unseen, or invisible Graces, and they live upon unseen Things.

Again, Faith and Love in their Travel carry the Soul into the Spiritual or Bosom-Love of Jesus; they dwell in the Bosom-Love of Jesus. I have thought sometimes, that Faith and Love are like two Twins that are born near together in the Soul, and they are nourish'd up together, they walk together, as it were, Hand in Hand unto Jesus; Faith cannot go without Love, nor Love will not go without Faith, and neither can go without Light; it's Light that discovers Jesus, Faith receives him, and Love lodges him in his Bosom; and as Jesus dwells in the Soul by Faith and Love, the Soul dwells in him by Faith and Love; and this Faith and Love are no less than the fruits of God's Eternal Mercy and Bosom-Love. Faith and Love as they do not come from Nature's Root, so they do not come by the best Nature's Life, as to Worth and Merit, but as they come from the Bosom of the Father's Love, so they lodge the Soul in the Bosom of his Son's Love.

Again, Faith and Love find Jesus precious, and alone to be only precious, *unto you that believe alone is precious*; yea, *altogether lovely*; all the world is nothing, nay, Heaven itself without a Jesus.

Again, Faith and Love highly admire, wonder and adore him in all his Glory; but indeed, this is more the Work of his Upper House in Glory; yet Faith and Love sometimes make large commentaries of the personal Glory of Christ, sometimes of his Offices, Graces, Promises, Providence, Government in his Laws, and Worship in his Church, so that the Soul becomes like the Queen of Sheba, when she beheld the Glory, the Greatness, and

and Attendants of Solomon, it is said, *There was more Spirit left in her*; even so, when the Soul swallow'd up with the Person, and Riches, and Glory of our Jesus, there is no more Spirit left in it; that is, there's no Spirit, Heart, or Life for this World, or the things of this World; but alas! how little of this do we find, this is only when Light, Faith and Love are in their highest Acts of Life and Motion.

Again, Faith and Love live in the Righteousness of another, not in its own; it shrouds and shelters the Soul under the spotless Righteousness of Jesus. Faith and Love look into themselves and see nothing but Imperfection, they look upon Jesus, and see all Perfection; but do not mistake me, it's not Faith as a Work that justifies, but Faith as an Act: It's that Faith, which by the Holy Ghost, unites our Souls to Jesus; upon which Union, the Soul by a single Act of Faith, as the Hand or Instrument, God, our Father, doth perform the Act of Justification freely, ev'n Pardon and Life for ever, by the Imputation of that unspotted Righteousness performed in the Person of Jesus. Hence we may learn this, that Faith as an Act lives upon Jesus for Justification; Faith and Love live upon Jesus for Sanctification of all the Graces of Life, which build up the Soul more and more till the perfect Day.

Again, Faith and Love in their Progress do practically single out Jesus Christ as the only Pearl Price; Faith and Love do only prize, esteem and value Jesus Christ, and he alone is exalted in the Soul, and the World is but Dross and Dung; Faith and Love refuse and leave all Pearl and earthly Glory.

Lastly, Faith and Love live upon Jesus, as the only Treasure and unsearchable Riches, which is durable Riches, even spiritual and everlasting. But some may reply and say, *In what Way or*

of Life do Faith and Love walk and live? To which I answer, that Faith and Love live in Prayer, hearing the Word, the Lord's Table, reading, meditation, and Contemplation; but of all these, I may give in my Witness, the Lord's Table has been the sweetest time of Life with me; when the King sitteth at his Table, my Spikenard, that Faith and Love, and holy Breathings, send forth the Smell thereof; but as to the more general and most constant Part of Life, Meditation, private and secret Prayer are those general Duties that run thorow a Christian's Life, for I speak as of the private Life of a Christian; and it's those Duties that Faith, and Love, and Light do travel for it's those Graces that are the Life of those Duties: All our Duties are dead and lifeless, empty and fruitless, where the Life of Faith and Love are wanting. But Oh how sweet's that Life, when they are mixed together! Prayer helps the Soul to Faith, and Faith helps the Soul to pray, Meditation helps them both; sometimes the Soul is full of Contemplations and Meditations, and sometimes fill the Soul with Prayer; sometimes the Soul is full of Prayer, and that fills the Soul with Meditation, and all is from the fresh Gales of free Grace; sometimes the Soul is full of Contemplation, that it can go into secret and cry; "Oh Jesus thou art precious, even thou only art precious, yea, altogether lovely; there is none comparable to thee, every Thing of Christ is precious!"

But now I would answer this Query, Is this so says, *Is Faith, Love, Hope, Joy always in their activity and Motion?* Alas! here I am stopt, here I am silent, now I desire to lament and mourn. There are the Relicks and Remains of the wretched earthly Heart; and I my self have wretched a Heart as any under Heaven, without the Grace of God in me, and God is pleased

to leave so much of that old rotten Heart, that we might ever be humble, mourn, and be afflicted before him; and there is so much worldly, earthly, unbelieving Workings of Heart, so much worldly Business and Incumbrances, so many Snare Oppositions, so much Dulness and Deadness of Heart in Duty, as if there was no Spark of divine Life remaining in the Heart: And what shall we say to this, Is there no such Grace in such Times? To which I answer, The Lord's Glory preserves the Seed of Life that he has planted in the Heart, the Habit and Root of Grace remains tho' it is not seen in outward Acts at all times; and it's known by these two things. (1st.) It keeps the Soul in Ways of Duty, there's a keeping up the Duties both of general and particular Calling, tho' sometimes there's but little Life left in them. (2dly,) The Habit of the Grace of Life keeps the Soul from outward Acts of Sin, though there be much secret Corruption in the Heart, and therefore David cries out, *Who can understand his Errors, cleanse thou me from my secret Faults, keep back thy Servant from presumptuous Sins, that he may not have Dominion over me.* I would only instance two Things, (1st,) That where any Person can live low, and tolerate themselves in Drunkenness, Cursing, Lying, Sabbath-breaking, Whoredom, Covetousness, and such like, I cannot see the least Spark of divine Life in them. (2dly,) Where there's no Prayer, either secret or meditative, I cannot see where Light, Faith or Love do live; but this I speak of those that know not God: And thus I have trac'd my own Heart, and given my Meditations of what I feel, as to the working of Grace separate from Grace, and the working of Grace by or in Gifts, and the working of Nature without either. And as to what I have spoken before or in the former Discourse, concerning Members breaking their Relation to the Church, if the

any that can object any Thing, I beg their
reply by a Letter, and I hope to answer it ac-
cording to the Light I have received. We have
a great Necessity, to look well to what Foun-
dation we build upon, and if it be right, that
the Word of the Lord's Prophecy is fulfilled in us,
the Haughtiness of Man shall be humbled, and the
Pride of Man shall be laid low, and the Lord alone;
even Jesus our God, shall be exalted in us at that
day; this Word is fulfilled in every true Heart,
and so it is in every true Church. If we would
know the proper Character of a true Church, it
is where Sense is thrown down, and the Lord
Jesus exalted in all his Laws, Influences, and Go-
vernment; and this fulfils those Words, *He shall*
be exalted, and be very high; he shall build the Temple
of the Lord, and he shall bear the Glory, and in his
Temple shall every one speak of his Glory, Again, They
shall hang upon him all the Glory of his Father's House.
Thus let all the Churches love, praise, and exalt
him, which is the Prayer of the worst, and mean-
est Member in that Church of Christ in New-
York, where our Lord dwells.

R. D.

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THE INTRODUCTION

AND

Apology of the Author

AS it is the Way or Custom of the Prophane, Debauched, Licentious and Brutish World, to cry out, *Who will shew us any Good?* so it is the Way of the professing World, who profess themselves to own the Name of God, and of his Jesus Christ, to cry up themselves, and conclude of themselves, that they are the only Church People of God, or the only People that God is in the World; let them be under what Name or Denomination soever, 'tis natural for every one to proclaim their own Goodness.

First, One Sort of People say, We are the True Church, and we will prove this from Antiquity: We are of Ancient Standing, and therefore the True Church. We are the First of New Testament Churches, and we have also, our ancient Councils, Fathers, Traditions, and our Learned Bishops and Priests to witness for us, that we are the True Church; but above all this, we have God's Vicegerent, or Christ's Vicar to witness for us, who has receiv'd a Prerogative Power from Above, to be Head or Supream over all Ecclesiastical and Civil Affairs, to Depose Printes at Pleasure, and to subject all Kings, Kingdoms and Governments to himself; therefore, we must

the only Church: Even thus the Brats of Babel smooch up themselves, and please and flatter themselves in their own Deceits, *Until their Iniquity be found to be hateful*, not at all observing how they have rejected, and cast off the only Head of the Church and Lord of Glory; in trampling under foot all his blessed Doctrines, breaking his Yoke sunder, casting off all his pure Laws and Institutions of Worship, utterly renouncing all Subjection and Conformity to him, in any measure answerable unto his blessed Word and Gospel.

Secondly, But says another Sort, We are the True and Ancient Church, we have our Twelve Tribes to witness for us, that we are God's Church; and all our Fathers, the Patriarchs and Prophets tell us, that we are the Seed of the Church; for did not God choose *Abraham* and his Seed for ever, to be his Lot, his Portion, and peculiar Treasure, above all People upon Earth, and as a Fruit of this he called them to be his Church in the Wilderness; and as our Fathers were planted of God to be his True Church, so there was no other Church but we for two thousand Years, and therefore, we must needs be God's Church and People: All which is true, they were the only Church, but they were conditionally so; for when they came to the Crucial, they stumbl'd at that Stumbling-Stone, and remain to this Day. But, alas! 'Tis Cause of Mourning, that their Eyes are not yet open'd, to look on *him whom they have pierc'd, and mourn.*

Thirdly, There's a third Sort, that call themselves the true Church, for say they, we take the whole Word of God for our Rule, and walk according to it; and therefore are the true Church. Now there is the History of the Word, and also the Mystery of it, there is the Letter of the Word, so, and the Spirit, Life, and Power of the Word, now where the latter is, there must needs be a Church; where the Mystery, Life, Spirit, and Power

er of the Word dwells in the Heart, Life and Conversation.

Fourthly, But says a fourth Sort of Professors, nay, but we are sure, that we are the only People, for behold we have the Light, Law and Power of God within our selves, and they testify for us that we are the only Church. And further, as we have this Power in us, so we live, and this is our Witness and Testimony, that we bear against a prophane World, and as we live in this Light and Power, when we dye, we give up this our Testimony unto him who gave it: These all the while do not so well observe, that there's a Law and Light without, as well as a Law and Light within; and also, that there's a glorious Person above, who is Christ, God-Man, as well as a Christ within. There's a Christ above with God, whose personal Righteousness does actually justify, as well as his communicable Grace and indwelling Presence in us sanctify. From whence observe, (1st) That it is not the Manner of the Spirit of Jesus, to catch hold of one Truth, and run away with that, and leave all the rest to drop. (2^{dly}) That wherever the Spirit of Jesus is, it takes hold of all and every Truth of Jesus. Again, wherever there's the true Spirit of Jesus, it gives every Truth of Christ its due Weight, Length, and Measure, according to the Measure of Gifts received; it does not take hold of one Truth, and forsake the rest, cast off, and trample under Foot the rest; all this concerns those Professors: I am speaking of the Truth, which they take hold of, and are swallowed up in, and nearest the Work of Sanctification, and yet they fall short of that which is their Bulwark and Defence, and that is, wherever there is slighting, or forsaking, and denying any positive Institution of our Lord Christ, all such fall short of practical Sanctification. I might be very large on this, but it's out of my Design, I

trouble

troubled to stay so long upon it, only we may learn this, that it's a dreadful thing to catch hold of one Truth, and leave all the rest behind our back. Again, to jumble all Truths into one, and not that neither, is far from the Spirit of Jesus. (2dly,) They can never evidence themselves to be the Spouse of Jesus, whose Light and Faith in the Holy Ghost, does not lead them into all, and every particular Truth of Jesus. Thus we see how every one claims their Right, and pleads their Interest, of being the Church of Christ. But I go on, From all that hath been said, it fully appears, that it's no frivolous, vain, or foolish Thing, to enquire into the Nature, Essence, or Being of Christ's Church; but it's a Thing of Weight, Worth and Concernment to every thinking Heart, that I would not go to prove the Church of Jesus, by Strength of humane Argument, natural Gifts, humane Learning, but by foundational Truths, Doctrine founded upon divine Revelation, and so, by Evidence, and Experience of divine Operation in all those who are truly sanctify'd by Faith in Jesus: For indeed, it is those who are the true Essence, Foundation, and fit Matter for Church, for all such, who are Enemies and Strangers to Sanctification by the Holy Ghost, know nothing aright, either of God, or themselves, and therefore, how can they practise, being ignorant of God; through the Blindness of their Heart: Our Lord therefore tells the Disciples, and others in Matth. 13. *It is given to you to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom, but to them it is not given.* In Mark it is said, *To them that are without, it is not given.* From which observe, that it's a Gift of God, peculiar to the Church, to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God: But you will say, How comes this, that not our Lord speak these Words to his Disciples only, and none else? I answer, It was spoke to them by Way of Eminency, and Superiority, as they

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they were those to whom our Lord gave not only miraculous, but extraordinary Gifts in the Ministry; whereby they had the Mysteries of the Kingdom in a more eminent and wonderful manner given them: And as they were the superior Pastors and Ministers, to lay the Foundation by their Doctrine for the Churches Faith, they are said to be *Steward of the Mysteries of Christ*; they had those hidden Mysteries reveal'd to them, which in all Ages and Generations before, were not made known to the Sons of Men concerning Jesus and his Kingdom, as they were made known to them. Wherefore their Doctrine is the standing Rule of the Churches Faith and Practice in all Ages. But yet I do not perceive, that the Words are limited to the Disciples only, and that for two Reasons: 1st. Because the Evangelist *Mark* says, there was with the Disciples a Multitude when they ask'd him about the Parable, and he said unto them, *It is giv'n, &c.* importing that he spake to the Multitude as well as to the Disciples. But 2^{dly}, and more especially, that other Word, *To them that are without it is not giv'n*. From which it is observable, that our Lord specifies and makes a Difference between those that are without, and those that are within; which Word, *within*, doth fully import the Church: As if he should say, "You that are my Church, my People, and my Followers, to you it is giv'n to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom". Again, *To you, and you only*, that receive the Word of my Gospel, to you that receive the Words of my Mouth, to you that hearken unto the Voice of my Spirit, that receive him in all his blessed Motions, and in all his sweet and comfortable Teachings, and Beams of Influence in a word, to you that are the Called of God, Sanctify'd in Jesus, to you it is giv'n, or to you this Gift giv'n, to know the Mysteries of his Kingdom." To this the three Evangelists agree in the Sense of their Words, tho' their Words are not

ame; One says, *To them*; Another, *To them that are without*; the Third, *To others it is not giv'n*: All which is the same in Sence, and follow'd with a judicial stroke of the most dreadful Judgment, that can befall a Soul on this side Hell: But our Lord does further exemplify the Meaning, where he tells us, that *To them that are without all Things are done in Parables, that in hearing they may hear, but not understand; and in seeing they may see, but not perceive; For the heart of this People is waxed gross, and their Ears are dull of hearing, &c.* at all which Words I desire to tremble, for they have rejected the Word of the Lord; and what hope is in them? Therefore, go say unto this People, in hearing you shall not understand; as if he should say, "Go speak to the Walls, speak to Stocks and Stones, which will hear, and receive it as soon as they." Again, The Apostle Paul to the Church of Corinth, concerning the incestuous Person, he makes the difference, says he, *What have I to do to judge them that are without*; meaning such that are without the Pale of the Church, without the Call, Grace or Government of the Church, as he speaks elsewhere of the Church before Calling, *At that time*, says he, *ye were without God, and without Hope, and without Christ, and without the Covenant, &c.* Do not ye judge them that are within, but them that are without God judgeth; therefore, cast away from among you that Wicked Person; in all which he does ever specify a Difference between the Church, and them that are without: Wherefore upon the whole it is evident, That there is a secret Work of Grace, or hidden Work of God in a more peculiar manner given to the Church, whereby they know the Misteries of his Kingdom. But now I come to the main thing, and that is this, *What are these Misteries, that in special are given to the Church to know?* I answer, They are such as the Apostle prays for in and for the Church of Coloss, Col. 2. 2. that they may have full Assurance of Understanding to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and

of Christ. Hence then, the great Mystery of all other is, to know and acknowledge God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; this is the most intricate and hidden Mystery, and that which is above the largest Gifts of humane Wisdom, and natural Understanding: Upon which Account it is call'd a Mystery, even a Mystery hid in God, and lodg'd in the secret Counsel of his Will, but made known in some measure unto the Church; for which cause it is, that our Lord returns Glory and Thanks unto God his Father in these Words, *Mat. 11. 25, 26. ----- I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid those things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* From which observe, That even the things of Christ's Kingdom in the Glory of Grace and Salvation, are hid from Wise and Prudent Men and reveal'd to Babes. But, *Who are those Babes?* answer, They are Babes in Christ, born of him, begotten unto him, born from Above, born anew, and so become his Children, and as such, they are Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ, as they are his Children, Members of his Body, the Church; he calls them Children, *Isa. 8. 18. Behold I and the Children whom thou hast given me, are for Signs and Wonders in Israel.* And they are called Babes more than twice in the New Testament; *I speak*, says the Apostle to the Church of Corinth, *as unto Babes, and not unto Men.* And in *1 Pet. 2. 2. As new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* All which amount to this, That the True Church the Spouse of Jesus are first Babes in him, before they can grow up in him to Maturity and full Age, so as to be receiv'd into Glory; but I would be more particular in those great Mysteries which are reveal'd to the Church; but not unto the World: Take, therefore, the World in general, with respect to the whole Race of Mankind in their fallen State, we may divide them into three Parts, two of which

re but little, or nothing at all, acquainted with the Mysteries of Grace and Salvation in the Kingdom of Christ.

First, The first are such, who are under the whole Power and Government of Apostate Nature, which is Universal or Absolute Darkness and Impotency, having their Understanding darkned, being alienated from the Life of God, thro' the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Heart.

Secondly, The second Sort are those, who are brought out of their Heathenish, or Idolatrous Life, and Work of Nature receiv'd from our first Parents, whereby they come to be instructed or enlighten'd by the Word and Law of God, and therefore, they take the Word for their Rule of Doctrine, Worship, and Life; but yet all this comes no further than to a Knowledge of God after the Law, and Letter of the Word, in the outward Form and Shadow of it, which Sort were the Scribes and Pharisees, who were great Expositors or Interpreters of the Law, but it was only in the Letter; and as such, they were no more than Letter Preachers, not finding the strict Sense or Meaning of the Law, which our Lord expounds in *Mat. 5.* and they were also short of the Sense and Feeling of the convictive and condemning Power of the Law, for Want of Perfection to answer the Purity of it; upon which Account, *It is our School-Master to bring us to Christ*; which I take to be the Moral Law, as it discovers Sin, and condemns for Sin, whereby we have Necessity to come to Jesus for Salvation. Again, As they had the Letter of the Word, so they joined with it the old Tradition of their Fathers, and so they fraught their Church with foolish Ceremonies, and empty Trash of human Tradition of their Ancient Fathers, with which also the *Romish Church* is fill'd at this Day; so they accuse and condemn all those that do not subject themselves to their Inventions, as the others did, when they came to our Lord, to accuse his

Disciples, saying, *Why do thy Disciples transgress the Tradition of the Elders, for they wash not before they eat.* Our Lord answers, *But why do ye transgress the Commandment by your Tradition? As Isaiah prophesied, This People draw near me with their Mouths, but their Hearts are far from me.* Thus they lay aside the Word of God, as to the Life, Power, and Purity of it, having only the Letter and their own foolish humane Traditions; and therefore, the Apostle clears the Difference, in these Words, *Rom. 2. last Verse, He is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, not in the Letter; That is, not in the outward Letter of the Word, but in the Spirit and Power of it, Whose Praise is not of Man, but of God.* Thus far of the second Sort.

Thirdly, I come now to the third Sort, which respect the Church; I mean, the true, spiritual, invisible Church, or Spouse of Jesus, take it either Catholick, or Particular; and I would speak all I have to say unto this Query:

But what are those Mysteries of the Kingdom in respect that the Church is acquainted with, of which the rest of the World fall short of, and are unacquainted with? I answer in these four or five Particulars.

First, Their Knowledge of God.

Secondly, Their Knowledge of Christ.

Thirdly, Their Knowledge of the Person, and Work of the Holy Ghost.

Fourthly, Their Subjection unto their espoused Lord. And,

Fifthly, Their Faith in him. All which are secret hidden Mysteries unto the first natural World, apostate, and also moral Nature in its best, renewed, and refined State, as it lives in the first Covenant, under Works, and not under Grace.

But, *First*, As to their Knowledge of God: *As* here I must stop, and make my Apology; "Alas, what am I, or who am I, or what are my Gifts, that I should speak of these deep Mysteries, and hidden

hidden things of God, when the most wise, learned, and able Men, Men of God, highly renowned for their Gifts of spiritual Wisdom, and Knowledge in the Things of God, and yet, the most knowing fall infinitely short of what is in God, or may be known of him; well may I, who am the least, meanest, and worst in the Church of Christ, wonder, and cry out with the Apostle, *Oh! the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom, and Knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out?* As also with Job, *Who by searching, can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty to Perfection?* And elsewhere in Job, *How little a Portion is known of him? The Thunder of his Power, who can understand?* Hence note, that all created Beings must be silent, and stop their mouths, as to a perfect knowing of God, I mean, absolute Perfection; Therefore, says the Apostle, *We know but in Part, and prophesy in Part, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in Part shall be done away.* But now I come to be more positive, and must affirm, that as Knowledge is a particular Grace of God, wrought in the Heart by the Holy Ghost, every Christian in the World has a Part or Portion of it, altho' very different: Some have more, and some have less, but every one have their Measure, and indeed, this is very clear from the Words of our Lord Christ, *John 17. 3.* Where our Lord, who is Wisdom itself, sums up the whole of Christian Religion in these Words, *This is Life eternal, that they might know thee the Living and True God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* From which we may infer, that effectual and powerful Knowledge, that's foundational and practical in Heart and Life, that which interests the Soul in God and Christ, which it hath eternal Life. Again, We may further note, that if it be eternal Life to know God and Christ, then it's eternal Death not to know God and Christ. Again, as the Grace of Knowledge is

attended with eternal Life, the Apostle exhorts the Church to grow in it, as the best Means to fortify them against Apostacy, and falling away, saying *Have a Care, or beware, lest you be led away with the Error of the Wicked, and ye fall from your own stedfastness; but grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* In which it must be supposed that there was Grace and Knowledge, or else, how could the Church grow up in them? but on this therefore, we are to mind, it is not every Kind of Knowledge that is efficacious unto Salvation. It's a common and general Thing, for all, who live under the Ministry of the Word, to have some Notions of God, as that he is the great and only God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and all Things therein the Almighty, All-powerful, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Heart-searching God, this, and a great deal more may be known of God, and yet it may be no more than a Head-Knowledge, that is, a speculative, and notional Knowledge floating in the Head, or Brain, or in the outward Court, and Fancies of the Mind; but never sink into the Bottom of the Heart, and substantial Powers of the Soul whereby to produce all other Graces, and become a Soul-renewing Heart, a transforming Heart, affording an experimental, appropriating and applicatory Knowledge, a Knowledge of Application and Reception of God, and Christ, as our God in Christ, through the Working Power of the Holy Ghost. This Knowledge is one great Part of the Mysteries of the Kingdom, and is peculiar to the invisible Church in Order to this, there's a Knowledge of what God is in the first Covenant, and what God is in the second; in the first Covenant God will not admit of the least vain Thought, but follows it with a Curse, Vengeance, and eternal Fire of his Wrath, which does evidence to the whole World the Purity and Holiness of his Nature; in the second Covenant he admits of nothing that filthy Man can do, he

not so much as regard, or look to, much less accept, Man in his fallen, apostate, rebel-State, he admits of nothing in the second Covenant but what Christ has done, he looks wholly to Christ, as the Substance and Condition of the Covenant; he looks on Christ in the Perfections of his Sufferings, *He was made perfect thro' Suffering*; he looks on Jesus in the Perfection of his Doing, he fulfill'd all Righteousness actually, he fulfill'd all Righteousness passively; God the Father, therefore, will admit of nothing in the Court of his Justice, but in the Perfections of Jesus; and as God the Father looks on a perfect Jesus, so he looks on the Church as they are in Jesus, he receives 'em to Mercy and Peace as they are in him; he receives their Persons and Services as they are in him, and after receives them to Glory also as they are in him; and as the Father looks on Christ for all, so the Church looks wholly to Jesus for all, for Pardon, Peace, Rest, Life and Salvation for ever. Now this Knowledge of God and Christ is mysterious, but it is the Soul's Life and Comfort above all other Knowledge whatsoever, and is in a peculiar manner given to the Church: It's the Church that knows what God is in the first Covenant, and what he is in the second; It's the Church that knows what God is in himself, and what he is in Jesus; It's the Church that knows God to be a *Consuming Fire* in himself, but a Gracious and Merciful God in Christ; the Church knows God to be irreconcilable in himself, but a reconciled God and Father in Christ; they know him to be inconceivable in himself, but manifesting himself and conceivable in Jesus; they know that God is incommunicable in himself, but communicable in Ways of Grace and Mercy thro' Christ Jesus: Even thus the Church comes to God in Jesus, and lives, dyes and appears before the Throne of God in him.

But now I would answer this one Objection that lies in the Way, *May not even Hypocrites and Reprobates*

bates that are got into the Church, have all this Knowledge you speak of, yea, a great deal more, and can speak of it more at large, and a great deal better than you can do?

I answer, I do not doubt it at all; but that they may have it in Notion and Outward Expression, but not in Heart, Soul, Life and Practice; they may talk of it as well as the best, but want the Faith, Love, Power and Impression of it in the Heart; this the Apostle Paul was aware of, and the Lord grants that you and every Professor may be so too, say he, *Tho' I understand all Misteries, know all Prophecies and have all Faith, so as to remove Mountains, yet without Charity, that is, without Love to God in Jesus, Love to his People, Love to every thing of Jesus, it all profits me nothing.* Thus we see, that Knowledge without other Graces is good for nothing; but of this I have hinted in one of the Epistles.

I come now to the Second Mystery, which is a measure made known to the Church, and that is *The Knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom to know is Life Eternal.* This Jesus was more darkly known under the Law in Old Testament Times, he was discovered and reveal'd to the Church under the Ceremonial Law by Types, Shadows and Figures, thorow which the Church did look, by a single Eye of Faith unto the Substance, even Jesus, who was to come but now in the Days of the Gospel Jesus being come and doing the whole Work he was to do in the Days of his Flesh, and ascending into his Glory, all Ceremonies, Types and Figures have their Period, the Substance being come, the Shadows vanish away. Wherefore now, We have a more full and glorious Revelation of Jesus Christ, the Sheddings forth of the Holy Ghost, which he has giv'n to all that obey him. Now the Knowledge of this Jesus and Reception of him in the Heart, is the Sum and Substance of the Churches Thoughts, Seekings and Desires, this is that which the Apostle prays for to the Church of Ephesus, that God would give them the Spirit of Wis-

and Revelation in the Knowledge of him; that is, of Je-
 sus. And we find, that the same Apostle himself is
 most solicitous, and vehement in his Desires after
 the Knowledge of Jesus. *I count all things but Loss*
and Dung, says he, for the Excellency of the Knowledge
of Christ, for whom I have suffer'd the Loss of all things,
and count them but Dung that I may win Christ. Let the
 Apostle have all the Wisdom and Knowledge of o-
 ther Things in the World that could be attained,
 he count them nothing in comparison of Christ, as
 he speaks 1 Cor. 2. 2. *I determined not to know any thing,*
save Jesus Christ, and him crucify'd. As if he should
 say, Let others seek after what Knowledge they
 please, let them understand all the Criticisms and
 deep things in Philosophy, all the Secrets of Nature,
 and all the Usefulness, Profit and Benefit of all the
 creatures one to another; let them understand all
 the Arts and Sciences, and be thorowly acquainted
 with all humane Affairs, I for my part, determine
 to know nothing, save Jesus Christ and him cru-
 cify'd. He first desires to know him, *that I may*
know him, that is, that I may know him in his Per-
 son, in his Greatness, Glory and Almightyness of his
 Person; that I may know him in his Sufficiency,
 Fullness and Riches of Grace in his Person.
 Again, That I may know him in his Love, Grace
 and Influence unto me; but to go on, *that I may*
know him, and him crucify'd; that is, that I may know
 for what Intent and on what Account my Lord was
 crucify'd, and the End and Design he had in being
 crucify'd; that I may know the blessed Fruits, Be-
 nefits and Blessings of his Death. Again, That I
 may know this very Jesus was crucify'd for me, and
 indeed, 'tis no Wonder, that the Church is so desi-
 rous after Jesus, if we consider him as the only
 Chief of the Ways of God, on Whom all our De-
 pendance is for Mercy, Life and Peace for ever.
 And further, For the Church to know this Jesus
 come in the Flesh, is one of the greatest of Gospel-
 Myste-

Myſteries, 1 Tim. 3. laſt. *Without Controverſy great the Myſtery of Godlineſs, God was manifeſt in the ſe* From whence we may obſerve, That the Incarnation of the Perſon of Chriſt, is the greateſt and moſt convincing Evidence of God's Eſſential Holineſs. God did evidently bare Witneſs of the ſovereign Purity of his Nature, in God the Second Perſon made manifeſt in the Fleſh. There could be no other Way found by Infinite Wiſdom to ſatisfy Juſtice, and remove Guilt, and take it away, but only by the Incarnation of the Perſon of Chriſt.

Again, The Incarnation of the Perſon of Chriſt, his Life, Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion are the Foundation of the Church's Faith, as in 1 Pet. 1. 2. *Who by him do believe in God, who raiſed him from the Dead, and gave him Glory, that your Faith and Hope might be in God.* Now, wherever there is this Faith and Hope in God, there muſt be a ſound and efficacious Knowledge of Jeſus, as a Preparatory and Forerunner of Faith; for tho' there may be Knowledge and the Heart not good, yet where there is none the Heart cannot be good: As our Lord ſays of the Samaritans in another Caſe, *You worſhip you know not what; ſo where there is a Want of the true Knowledge of Jeſus, it may be ſaid, You believe you know not what.* As our Lord is called *Wiſdom*, Pſ. 8. 1. *I Wiſdom dwell with Prudence;* and elſewhere, *The Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God, and Wiſdom in himſelf,* therefore it is, that the Wiſe Man, ſo often in the Proverbs, calls to us to preſs after the Grace and Wiſdom that flows from Wiſdom itſelf.

From hence we may infer, That the true Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus, in his Perſon, Office, Grace, Love, Promiſes and Influences, and receiving him as ſuch, is that Wiſdom that enters into the Heart, and makes Knowledge pleaſant to the Soul: It's this Wiſdom that is better than Riches, and all Things elſe are not to compar'd with it. It's this Wiſdom *The Merchandize of which is better than*

ever, and the Gain thereof is better than Gold.
This is the Merchant our Lord compares to the Kingdom of Heaven, *Mat. 13. 45, 46.* The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Merchant Man, seeking goodly Pearls: Who when he had found one Pearl of great Price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. By the Kingdom of Heaven here, we are to understand the Gospel Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Grace in and to the Gospel; not the Kingdom of Glory, for there is no Buying or Selling there. By the Merchant, we are to understand all Professors of the Gospel, and the Grace of the Gospel. By seeking goodly Pearls, we are to understand their Progress and Travail, that is, all their good Works, as Works of Charity, and other good Works done to Neighbours, or Strangers, and also all their good Prayers, Fasting, going to Church, and Serving God in this their Profession of the Gospel Kingdom. By those goodly Pearls, we are to understand the Happiness they propose, or the Object of their Comfort, Joy, Peace and Blessings in their Profession and Progress, in seeking good-Pearls.

Says One, Well, I thank God, I have been a good, honest Man all my Life, I never wrong'd my Neighbour, neither did I cheat, conzen, or defraud any; what was their just Right and Due; and besides that, I have heard many good Sermons and Prayers, and I bless God, I have great Comfort and Peace in these Things, and this is a goodly Pearl, that will do me in stead, and do me good for Time to come, when I come to Death and Judgment.

Says Another, I have kept close to my Church ever since I knew any Thing of good, and kept my Sabbaths pretty well without profaning of them, I have not run gadding about to foolish and sinful Visits, nor did I spend my Sabbaths, or other Days in Taverns, or Ale-Houses, or in Sports, or Gaming, and this I hope is a goodly Pearl, that will do me good in my latter End.

Another

Another he comes and says, I have kept my Church upon all Occasions, Sabbath-Days and Week-Days I have at all Times kept the Sacraments, and Fast Days, and all Times of Prayer and Sermons, be over and above all that, I have prayed much my self I have prayed in my Family daily, and also in secret in my Closet, and also have read many good Books and besides all this, I have given much to the Poor and all this must needs be a goodly Pearl in mine Eye and I hope I shall dye with Comfort and Peace in

Now if we observe, here is nothing but self in this, and our Lord tells us that in his Time, there were some that were righteous in their own Eyes and would feign themselves just Men. And the apostle Paul tells us of some, *that sought Righteousness by the Works of the Law*; and do we think, that there is none in our Day that do so.

But now I come to speak of this *Wise and Rich Merchant*, this Merchant in his seeking *goodly Pearls*, finds one Pearl that's a thousand Times better, far beyond all the rest, wherefore he goes and sells that he hath, and buys this Pearl: But what is this Pearl that is so mighty rich and valuable? I answer, it's other than the Lord Christ himself. And Who is this Merchant that buys this Pearl? In this we are not to think, that our Lord means it of one single Person as if one single Man did buy this Pearl, and no body else in the World; but that this Merchant presents to us, every true, sincere and saved Soul who is got out of all, and left and forsaken all his best Works, Duties, and Righteousness, and cleaves unto the Lord Christ alone, for Life, Peace, and Blessedness for ever, and this becomes practical in Judgment, Will, and Affection. But you'll say, *What does this Wise Merchant leave off all his Duties, and good Works does he leave Prayer, Hearing, and all his good Works Justice, Charity, and other good Things, in buying this Pearl Jesus?* I answer, no, by no Means, he walks those Ways more closely, and in Jesus, he does

ties, and good Works, from another Spring and
fountain than before; from a Spring of Love, and
Fruit of Faith in Jesus, he walks in all good Ways
and Duties in Point of Practice, but lives in none
Point of Dependance; but only upon Jesus. But
say again, that the true Wise Merchant, or Spouse
of Jesus, walks in all Ways of Righteousness and Du-
ties, because our Lord himself walks with his Church
in those Ways, *Prov. 6. 20. I lead, says he, in the Way
of Righteousness, in the midst of the Paths of Judgment.* In
all the Ways of Holiness and Paths of Righteousness
that himself has appointed, he walks with his Church.
We may further understand this Wise Merchant
buying this Pearl Jesus by a Parity of Reason, as in
other Things, when any Body buys any Thing they
give it into Possession, or into their own keeping,
in Lieu of something that they give for it, according
to Agreement, and the Buyer's freely willing in this
exchange; so in selling any Thing, let it be any
Goods, House, or Land, we part with them for some-
thing that we are more desirous of, and have a great
Need and Necessity for, than what we part with.
But now all this is frivolous, and falls so far short
of what I am speaking, that 'tis not worth naming,
for in these things both the Buyer and Seller return
with other Worth for Worth; that is, something
they both judge equivalent, and are satisfy'd with:
but in the Case I am speaking of 'tis otherwise, for
the Holy Ghost is pleas'd to make use of such
Cases, as *Buying and Selling*, as in *Rev. 3. 18. I coun-
sell thee to buy of me Gold tryed in the Fire; &c.* and so
of this Merchant, *he sold all to buy this Pearl*, yet we
ought to understand that in Buying this Pearl Jesus, we
give nothing in lieu that's good for any thing; and
there 'tis said *Come, buy Wine and Milk, without Money
without Price*; 'tis to be understood of Parting
with, and Forfaking both our own Wickedness and
Unrighteousness; for as to our Wickedness there are
Guilt and Wrath attending it, and as for our Right-
eousness

ness, there is no Worth nor Value in it; *For 'tis but as filthy Rags, and therefore has Need of Pardon as well as other Sins.*

From all that hath been said, We may apprehend by this little Glimpse of Light, that the true Church and Spouse of Jesus is let into this Mystery of the Knowledge of himself so far, as to chuse him for her Lord, her all in all, and cleave unto him for her Prophet, Priest, and King for ever. I come now to the third Thing.

Thirdly, The Church in some small Measure brought into the *Knowledge of the Person, and Work of the Holy Ghost*: He's said to be the third Person in the Trinity, not divided, or any Way distinct from the Father and the Son, in Equality and Substance, but as to their Persons they are three; so that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the Holy Ghost either; but they are distinct in Person, in the Order of Nature, by those Works assigned to each other; and therefore, the Work of Creation is attributed to God the Father, Redemption to the Son, Sanctification to the Holy Ghost, and yet not one of these works without each other as to their Essence. Again, 'tis proper for the Father to beget, the Son to be begotten, the Holy Ghost to proceed; now clear in *Heb. 1.* The Son is said to be the *Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person or Likeness*, and the Holy Ghost proceeding from both, which that Reverend and Holy Bishop Ussher now, I hope, with Christ above, gives the best Resemblance of, according to our weak Capacity; he considers it thus, "If a Man looks in a Glass, there 'tis the Likeness of his own Face, if he smiles, there 'tis the smiling of two Faces". Thus it is in the Trinity, there's the Father begetting, the Son begotten, which makes the Resemblance of two Faces, there 'tis the smiling of both, which represents the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son. There here is one in three, and three in one, which is all

ed, the same in Substance, equal in Power and
ory. But alas! what am I to speak of these things,
am ashamed of my Ignorance, I have cause to stop
re, and mourn over my Darkness; but as Know-
ge is necessary to Faith, we should endeavour
er some measure, be it ever so small. But now
to the Work of the Holy Ghost, 'tis common to
as Christians; as it is an experimental Work of
d, and the Substance of Practical Christianity, 'tis
ghost, if not altogether, the first thing we teach
Children, that as *God made them, Jesus Christ re-
m'd them, so the Holy Ghost sanctifies them.* But
s! how little of this is known, and less felt and
cticed among us. Having spoke much to this in
seven Particulars concerning the Church, I shall
very short on it here, and I would first premise
se few Things.

First, That all such, who are Scoffers at and De-
ers of Godliness, and spiritual Worshipping of
h, have nothing of this Work begun upon them.

Secondly, They who allow themselves in Prophane-
s and Debauchery, or Sabbath-breaking, have no-
ing of this Work of Sanctification as yet begun.

Thirdly, Where there is no Conviction of Sin, and
ery by Sin, there is not the least Beginning of
Sanctification by the Holy Ghost. But I will stay
longer here.

Now come now to the Positive Part, concerning the
Work of the Holy Ghost, in his Progress or Going
in the Work of Sanctification: Indeed, I have
thought, and do, to this Day, think, That the
greatest Mercy and Blessing, that ever God gave to
lost Race of fallen *Adam*, was the Gift and Grace
of the Holy Ghost, next to the Lord Jesus Christ,
is the Fountain Blessing, and has all Blessings in
Himself: The Spirit of the Lord had never had any
thing to do with you, or me, or any Soul living,
had not sent his Son to be the Saviour of the
Church. What are we, or or any Soul living,

if the Spirit of the Lord be wanting in us? Let us look a little, and see, Oh! the monstrous Fierceness and Power of Rebellion against God, the Resoluteness and Violence to Sin, the Stupidity and Hardness of Heart, the Blackness and Darkness of Soul, the Stupifaction and Benumbedness of Conscience, the Infatuation of the Judgment, all this, and more is to be found in that Soul, where the Holy Ghost is wanting. Where can I begin to number the Guilt, or measure the Filth, that fills the Soul that wants the Holy Spirit: Now if the Spirit of the Lord be at work on you, or me, or any other, what can we have to admire and praise the Author and Fountain of it?

But to return, As the Holy Ghost is the Worker of our Sanctification, he begins,

1st, With that Darkness that over-runs the whole Soul, he searches into every Corner of the Heart to demolish and dispel that Darkness, and send in Light and Glory in the Room of it; then is that Word of the Lord fulfilled, *To them that sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, hath Light shined*

2^{dly}, The Holy Ghost goes further, as it were, the Soul stark dead, under the Life and Power of Indwelling Sin, it destroys that cursed Death, and works Life in that dead Heart, as in *Ephes. 2. 5. hath he quickened, who were dead in Trespasses* and

3^{dly}, He brings the Soul wholly off from Confidence in the Flesh, from Self-Righteousness, Self-Love, and Self-Glory, and brings it off from false Bottoms, unto him who is the Resurrection and the Life; then is that Word made good, *Prov. 1. 5. Whoso findeth me findeth Life, and shall obtain Favor of the Lord*. But how wou'd, or how cou'd the Soul find Christ, if it were not for the Holy Ghost.

4^{thly}. The Holy Ghost carries on his sanctifying Work on the Heart, by its keeping close to, and resting in the Lord Jesus: As Jesus is the Way to the Father, so the Soul is kept in him as the Way to

spirit: As Jesus is the Truth of all God's Promises, Grace and Mercy, so the Spirit keeps the Soul in him as Truth. Again, As Jesus is the Life, so the Spirit keeps the Soul in him as its only Life; even thus where the Spirit of the Lord begins the good Work, it carries it on to the Day of Redemption. Thus much for the third Mystery, that the Church is in some measure acquainted with, as they are under a Work of Sanctification.

Fourthly, The Subjection and Obedience of the Church to its Lord, has a Mystery in it: As there is a Mystery of Iniquity in the Worship of Romish Inventions, there is a Mystery of Grace in Divine Institutions. The Apostle speaking of the Romish Apostacy and calling away, tells us, *That the Mystery of Iniquity already work, which Mystery of Iniquity, I humbly conceive, is in their very Worship; for as they worship God in a false Way, 'tis a Mystery to them; they either cannot, or will not see, and therefore, it becomes a Mystery to them; even so there is a Mystery of Grace in the Obedience of the True Church, which the Earthly or Worldly Church sees not: but now as the Laws of the Spouse of Jesus are spiritual, so the Church is spiritual; I delight, says the Apostle, in the Law of God after the inward Man: hence it is, that the Church looks not at the Letter, or at the Word as outward; but at the Inside, at the Divinity, or Spirituality of the Word and Law in which they walk. Again, They rest not in it, but go out after him to whom it directs; David walked in some Law, when he said, My Soul follows hard after thee; but it's thy right Hand that upholds me. Again, There's an heavenly Spring of Faith and Love in their Obedience, which the Worldly Church, or Earthly Professors have not: this is, indeed, the Sweet of Life on this Side of Glory to come. David tells us, Psalm 19. 11. that keeping thy Commandments there is great Reward. He does not say, there shall be a great Reward here-*

after, but now, even here, there is a great Reward. Oh! Who knows the Peace, Joy, Love, Sweetness and Refreshings there are in Walking in Divine Laws, but he who feels them: Well may the Psalmist say, *Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them.*

But here lyes an Objection in the Way, Have not even the Saints and True-born Church of Jesus, a carnal Part in them, that often hinders and deadens the Hearts, and deprives 'em of that Joy, Sweetness and Refreshings they once had?

I answer, 'Tis very true, with Lamentation and Mourning I speak it; Alas! how often is the Soul a Captive to the carnal Part, and kept under by the Relicks of an earthly Nature? And indeed, we need not much wonder at the Matter, when the great Apostle Paul, who had so much of the sweet Presence of Jesus, and so many Visions and Revelations, crys out, *Oh! Wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death?* And again, *The Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under Sin,* before he had his Rejoicings in hopes of the Glory of God. Rom. 5. From whence we observe, That the best and highest Saints have their Ebbings and Flowings. I have thought, sometimes, that if all true Believers were always alike, full of Joy and Comfort, their Lives wou'd be a Burthen, and they would be ready to cry out, *Oh! that I were gone, even now, now, that I were above, and with Christ, which is far better.* But that is not it, it pleases God, who is the Sovereign God of Grace, to give how, what, and when he pleases; if we were not Hindrances to our selves, we might have much more than we have. But to return, the Saints have not always the like Frame of Heart, yet they keep steddy in their Way, *For the Ways of the Lord are right, and the Just shall walk in them:* They have a Vital Principle in them, the Spirit of Life and Life in them keeps them from Falling, and keeps them on in his Way; *The righteous shall*

his Way, and he that hath clean Hands shall grow
onger and stronger. Thus then the Church has the
dden Mistry, and invisible Grace in her Obedi-
ce, which the Worldly or Legal Church are Stran-
ers to. Again,
Fifthly, There is a great Mistry in the Faith of the
urch: There's an Obedience of Works, and an
edience of Faith; now this Obedience of the
urch is called the Obedience of Faith. For this
is the Preacking of the Gospel, and the Scriptures of
Prophets made known to all Nations for the Obedience
Faith. And 'tis elsewhere call'd the Obedience
Faith, as Rom. 1. 5. *The Grace of God and their Apo-*
ship were given on purpose to the Obedience of Faith a-
ng all Nations. Now suppose, that all the good
d best Works were done by the Church, that
ld possibly be done in this World, yet without
ith they would be all abortive, and good for no-
ng. Hence it is, That all the good Works of the
urch are Works of Faith, their Prayers are Pray-
of Faith, their Hearing is in Faith, their Praises
Thanksgivings are in Faith, their Sacraments,
ir Fast Days are all in the Faith of the Holy
ost. Again, All their Actings on God in Jesus
Grace and Salvation, are Acts of Faith. From
ence observe, That Faith is a most glorious and
prehensive Grace, that it takes in the whole Life
the New Creature; it is so extensive, that it runs
row all the New-Creature Life; therefore it is,
the Holy Ghost both in the Old and New Testa-
nt fums it up in these Words, *The just shall live by*
it. This Life of Faith lives wholly in another,
in self; it receives all from another, it walks
another, even Jesus, not in self; *For thou, Lord,*
wrought all our Works in us. Again, John 3. 21. *He*
doth Truth, cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may
made manifest, that they are wrought in God. This
in Scripture is sometimes said to be the Gift
od, *We are saved by Grace, and that of Faith, not of*

our selves, it is the Gift of God; not of Works, last we should boast. Whence observe, That wherever there is a Leaning upon, or Trusting to Works, it becomes natural to them to boast; but 'tis not so of Faith. Again, 'Tis call'd *The Faith of God's Elect*, importing thus much, that this saving Faith is giv'n in a special manner to the Elect, or Church of Jesus. Again, it is call'd *The Faith of the Operation of God*, it is a mighty working; operative Power of God. Hence note, Wherever this Faith is, there is great Power; *Your Faith should not stand in the Wisdom of Man, but in the Power of God.* And he elsewhere calls it, *The exceeding Greatness of his Power to us ward who believe, according to the Working of his mighty Power that raised our Lord from the dead.* But I return, This Faith flows in with Baptism: The Apostle has the same thing twice in *Rom. 6.* and *Col. 2.* *Bury'd with him by Baptism, wherein you are risen to Newness of Life:* The other, *You are risen thro' the Faith of the Operation of God.* Both which have the same Import. But what is meant by *being bury'd with him by Baptism*? I take Baptism here to be that Baptism of the Holy Ghost which the Apostle calls that *one Baptism*, saying *There is one God, one Faith, one Baptism;* which imports the Work of the Holy Ghost in the New Birth, and is that Baptism *John* speaks of, that Jesus should baptize his People with, that is, *With the Holy Ghost and with Fire;* by which Fire is meant all those Afflictions, Tryals and Temptations that usually attend this Baptism. Now if *being bury'd with him by Baptism* holds good in Water-Baptism, and that every baptized Child were bury'd, and risen with Christ in Water-Baptism, then what a glorious Church and blessed Nation should we have? How full of Grace and Holiness would it be? But alas! We see otherwise; for indeed, 'tis the Nature of the New Birth to transplant the Soul into the Image, Grace, Love and Likeness of Jesus, thro' the Efficacy of Grace, as it comes under the second Covenant. No

his New-Creature Grace is that Seed of God that remains in them, and tho' all the Powers of Hell, and Wicked of the Earth, and struggling Power of Corruption be at Work to root up, and destroy this Seed of God that's sown in the Heart, yet they can't: And why so? but because 'tis the Seed of God's own Planting and Watering, that he may be glorify'd; and the visible Marks of it will be seen in the Life and Conversation: Away then, with our foolish Dreamers that tell us of a New Birth in Water-Baptism; but I have giv'n my Sence of that to one of the seven Particulars. I'll now return to the Words, *being bury'd with, even with him by Baptism*; this being bury'd wholly respects the old Adam, which is this, a Bringing all the filthy Life, Power and Working of Sin unto the Death, and burying it with him. Again, It brings all the filthy Bags of old Adam's Righteousness unto Death and the Grave, with Jesus: The Word says, *Bury'd with him unto Death*, and then *As we have been planted together with him in the Likeness of his Death, we shall also be planted together in the Likeness of his Resurrection*. But to proceed, This Faith is also call'd, *The Faith that was once deliver'd to the Saints*: Here are two things desirable to be known. 1st. What is this Faith. And 2^{dly}. Who are the Saints to whom it was deliver'd. I would speak a little to the latter. 1st. This Faith was deliver'd unto the first Fathers of the Church immediately after the Fall, and we find Abel to be the first on Record in this Faith; but before Abel could have this Faith, there must be some Promise for the Footing or Foundation of it: Wherefore God preached the Gospel in Paradise, and gave forth this Promise, *The Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpent's Head*. Here was Footing for Abel's Faith. But what could Abel see in this Promise at first sight? No doubt, but that his Father's Fall brought such a desperate Stroak, and fearful Blow upon his whole Posterity, as that it was impossible ever

to be able to recover himself, or others; *Abel* must therefore, see, that to *break the Serpent's Head*, could not be by the common Stock in the ordinary Way of Generation, but it must be some great, or extraordinary Person that must encounter with, and be able to break the Serpent's Head. But what is meant by breaking the Serpent's Head? It's no other nor less than to break the Power of his Kingdom, whereby he reigns over and in the Heart, Soul and Life of the whole Seed of *Adam* in their fall'n State. Now *Abel* seeing this, must look further than the bare Letter or Outside of the Promise; he must needs search further, and be scrupulous and inquisitive to find the Meaning of the Promise. But what had he to search with? I answer, As it was a Gospel Promise, so he had a Gospel Faith; he had a Divine, Evangelical Faith, a Faith wrought in him by the Holy Ghost by which he pry'd and search'd into the Mystery and secret Depth of the Promise. Hence, observe, That a Divine or Gospel Faith has a penetrating and searching Eye; it penetrates into the Greatness and hidden Riches of the Promise. Again, It penetrates into the Goodness and Blessings of the Promise: As it sees the Greatness, Goodness and Blessings of the Promise, so it receives and applies the Blessing and Goodness to itself. Further, What did *Abel* see and receive in this Promise? He saw the *Messiah*, though afar off; the Sent-One of God, the Messenger of the Covenant; he saw in this Promise the Lord Jesus the Son of *Mary*, of the Seed of *David*, who is *Christ the Lord, the Lord of Glory*: We do not find a Work of *Cain's* Faith, therefore he was for Works, and not other for Faith, which Faith receiv'd the Lord Jesus, as the only One that could break the Serpent's Head.

Again, *Enoch* was another to whom this Faith was deliver'd, of whom 'tis said, that *He walk'd with God*; which, I think, is one of the highest Characters that ever Mortal had. Lord, What is *Man*

that thou art thus mindful of him! and admits him to walk with thee. How did *Enoch* walk with God? Was he not one of the fall'n Posterity of *Adam*, one that had broken the Covenant with his Father, and under the same Condemnation with him? How then could *Enoch* walk with God in this broken Covenant? Were not all Men by this thrust out of Paradise, banish'd from the Glory of God, and shut out of his Favour, and under a Curse, and all Converse and Communion between God and Man was stopp'd; how then did *Enoch* walk with God? I answer, He walked in another Way, he was taken out of the first Covenant, and put into the second; he walked with God, by Faith, in the same Promise that *Abel* did, and was accepted in: He had a single Eye unto Jesus, the *Messiah* to come; he look'd into the Promise, and saw Jesus in it; by which we may conclude, that God will not have Converse or Communion with any, but such who are of the Spirit and Faith of *Abel* and *Enoch*. Now this Gospel Promise was into what the Church had to live on, during her Minority, which was up-ward of two thousand Years, all from *Enoch* to *Noah*, and so to *Abraham*, and down-ward, even to all the Old Testament Saints, in which Times they had more full, and clearer Promises, than in *Enoch's* Time.

I come to speak of one more, who had this Faith deliver'd to him in a greater Measure, because of his great Tryal that he was exercised with in his Faith; and that was *Abraham*, who is often call'd *The Friend of God*, and *Father of the Faithful*, which are the highest Signals of Favour and Tokens of Renown. That *Abraham's* call'd the Father of all Believers, may be upon a double Account: 1st. Because the Promise was in a particular Manner made to him, I say, To *Abraham* and his Seed, in whom all Nations should be blessed: Now this Seed in whom all are blessed, is meant of Christ, To thy Seed, which is Christ; so that all Nations that

that are of the true Seed of *Abraham*, they are blessed as they are in Christ *adly*. They are *Abraham's* Children: As *Abraham's* Faith was of the right Kind, Nature and Spirit, his Faith took Hold of the Promise and brought him to Jesus to whom the Promise led; his Faith was a justifying, sanctifying, and saving Faith, and such are all his Children, because their Faith is the same in Kind, tho' not in Degree with *Abraham's*, his Faith lodg'd his Soul in a Jesus to come, ours in a Jesus that is come.

Object. But how did *Abraham's* Faith lodge his Soul in Jesus, when 'twas above two thousand Years before ever Redemption-Work was accomplish'd in the Person of Jesus?

Ans. I answer, that divine or spiritual Faith doth substantiate or realize Things that are not, as if they were, because wherever there's God's Promise, there is God's Faithfulness; now as the Promise did point out Christ, and look at Christ, *Abraham* looks and searches into the Meaning of the Promise: For the Promise was in this short Word, *In thy Seed shall all be blessed*, not telling the Person, or the Work of Redemption; how, or in what Manner 'twas to be done, all this was the Mystery to be found out in the Promise. But how did *Abraham* see into this Mystery, no Doubt, but that it was by divine Instinct, or Revelation, by the impulsive Power and indwelling Presence of the Holy Ghost, whereby he had Beams of Light let into his Soul; and also sweet Sights and blessed Views of a Jesus held forth in the Promise. He saw that Jesus would surely come, and redeem the whole Seed of *Isaac* according to Promise; therefore our Lord tells us, that *Abraham* saw his Day, and joyc'd to see it; he saw by Faith the Life, Death, Resurrection and Glory of Christ, with all the blessed Fruits, Grace, Mercy, Life and Peace, that should flow therefrom,

But when did *Abraham* rejoyce to see Christ's Day? In the History of his Life, I cannot find any particular time express'd; I think, it must have been those three Times; but especially two: I will name the three, 1st. His Calling, or effectual Call, wherein God makes this Promise, *In thy Seed shall all Nations be blessed*; that is, in Christ, that shall come of thy Seed; here was Matter of Joy, in which he might see Christ's Day. 2dly. At his Justification, when God told him, his *Servant should not be his Heir*, but *one born in thy House shall be thy Heir*. And he took him abroad, and bid him look *East, West, North and South*, and tell the Stars if he could, and said, *So shall thy Seed be*: Upon which it is said, *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for Righteousness*; at which very Minute of time, *Abraham* was justify'd in my Thoughts. For here was God's Act of Mercy in Imputation to *Abraham's* Act of Faith. We cannot think, that it was either the Number or Nature of *Abraham's* Seed as they were all sinful, that *Abraham's* Faith did look to; but 'twas Christ, and only Christ, that *Abraham's* Faith was plac'd upon: He beheld a Christ to come, and redeem his Seed, *he saw Christ's Day* in this Promise, in whom *all his Seed was blessed*; and well he might rejoyce. 3dly. At his Temptation: After these Things it's said he tempted *Abraham*, the meaning is, he tryed *Abraham's* Faith, in that he commanded him to slay *Isaac*, the promised Seed of whom Christ should come, *in whom all are blessed*. Here his Command seems to dash all in Pieces at once, when the promised Seed with all the Blessings of it must be cut off; Satan might have suggested, Now where is the Promise? What will become of all this numerous Seed and rich Blessings promised? but behold, he staggers not at the Promise, but gets, and sets every Thing ready, then goes to the Place, and puts all in Order, lifts *Isaac* up upon the Altar, and goes to strike the Blow, but now behold and wonder, in the Mount the Lord is seen, as it were saying,
Stay

Stay thy Hand, O faithful One, look back, see the Ram in the Thicket; upon which the Word tells us in *Heb. 11*. *He accounted God was able to raise him from the dead, from whence also he received him in a Figure*. But how is that? I answer, he received him as a Figure of that Jesus, held forth by that Lamb caught in a Ticker, this Lamb Jesus comes in *Isaac's* Room. *Isaac* here, with all his Seed, the whole Church of God under Heaven, is about to be slain, to be offered in Sacrifice, under the fierce Wrath of Almighty God and burning Fire of his Justice, but behold the Lamb Jesus, he comes in *Isaac's* Room and Stead, and keeps off the Blow, stops the Wrath of God, and satisfies Justice; in this *Abraham* must needs see Christ's Day, and well might he wonder and rejoyce: Thus I think, *Abraham* in his Calling, Justification, Temptation, saw Christ's Day. It's therefore not without good Reason, that *Abraham* is call'd Heir of the New World, and Father of all that believe. In the first Place he was Heir with that Jesus in whom all and every Soul in the new World is sav'd 2dly. He is Father of all Believers, *Jews* and *Gentiles*; because as I said, their Faith in Kind is the same with his, they all look at one Jesus. Again, As *Abraham* saw Christ's Day, so did *Noah*, he saw Christ in that Sacrifice he offer'd as soon as he set Foot on dry Ground wherefore he became Heir of the Righteousness of Faith, *Moses* also saw Christ, when he went out of *Egypt*, not fearing the Wrath of the King, as seeing him who is invisible. The Church in the Wilderness saw Christ's Day in their Sacrifices, and in their looking up to the Serpent of Brass. The Prophet *Isaiah* saw his Day, which *St. John* takes Notice of *Chap. 1*. Thus said *Isaiah*, *When he saw his Glory, and spoke of him*. From all which we may conclude, and say How great! how superlative excellent is this Grace of Faith, if it be with Power by the Holy Ghost. What Need have we to cry with the Apostles, *Lord increase our Faith*. And with the poor Man, *Lord believe, help thou my Unbelief*.

By this Time we may see, that they who are truly
 hous'd to our Lord Jesus, have some competent
 knowledge, or Insight into the Misteries of the King-
 dom of Christ; but the World and the legal Church
 have not. It's his espoused Ones that have a saving
 knowledge of God, of Jesus Christ, and the Holy
 Ghost. It is they who conform to the Spirituality of
 the Law, as sincere and universally obedient, and al-
 low, taste, and feel the Mystery of Faith. And
 therefore the Apostle tells us, *That if our Gospel be hid,*
it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this
world hath blinded the Minds of them that believe not.
 Now this Gospel being hid, it not only refers unto
 Jews and Pagans, but ev'n to us where the Word and
 Mystery of the Gospel comes from. Whence observe,
 That there are some People among us, to whom
 the Gospel is hid. 1^{stly}. That where, or to whom-
 ever this Gospel is hid, they are a lost People.
 But what's meant by *being hid*, the Word tells us,
it is hid.

I answer in four Things. 1st. The Gospel of ef-
 fectual Calling is hid. 2^{dly}. The Gospel of Union
 with Jesus is hid. 3^{dly}. The Gospel of Justification
 by Faith in imputed Righteousness is hid. 4^{thly}. The
 Gospel of new-Creature Life is hid. Well, but don't
 our Protestants believe the Gospel, yes, surely.
 Go to the cursed Swearer, and ask, Sir, don't you
 believe the Gospel? he says yes. Go to the Drunk-
 ard, Sir, don't you believe the Gospel? yes. Go to
 the covetous Worldling, and ask, Sir, don't you be-
 lieve the Gospel? yes, with all my Heart. And so
 the rest, all which Faith falls short of Devil's
 Faith.

I have thought sometimes, that there are three
 sorts of Faith that ruin abundance of our Prote-
 stants; there's a blind Faith, an idle Faith, and a dead
 Faith. 1st. A blind Faith: This blind Faith stumbles
 at every thing of Christ, that makes for its own Sal-
 vation, it stumbles at his sweet and heavenly Teach-
 ings,

ings, it stumbles at all his heavenly Laws and Government, and every Thing else; *Blessed is he, who forever shall not be offended in me, saith our Lord.* 2dly. There's an idle Faith: This Faith talks much, but does nothing, either in Heart or Life to any Purpose. 3dly. There's a dead Faith: Suppose you come to a dead Corps, and lay ten hundred Weights of Lead upon him, yet he feels it not. Why so, because the Man is dead: So if you come to a dead Faith, and press the Guilt of all its Sins upon it, and the heavy Wrath of God that follows, it feels it not: Why so? Because Faith is dead.

But now I'll close with the Churches Faith, which is a working Faith; 1st. It works much by Prayer, where there's much Faith, there's much Prayer. Again, It works much by Love, where much Faith is, there's much Love. Again, Where much Faith is, there's much Praise and Thanksgiving. But how does Faith go with the Soul? It ushers the Soul within the Gates of Paradise, and leaves it in perfect Love and Praise for ever, and ever.

A

DESCRIPTION

OF A

Gospel Church :

In a Letter to a Friend.

My Dear Friend,

From what Discourse I had with you upon my First Visit, when I was in Town, concerning some of our Church-Members breaking off; it hath been much press'd upon me to discover the Evil hereof in Writing. And,

First, I shall give some Short and True Account, what a Gospel Church is.

Secondly, I shall discover when there is a True voice, or Call of God in his Word, to separate or break off from it.

First, I apprehend a Church of our Lord's Institution, to be, *1st*. A Called People by the Word and Spirit. *2dly*. A Sanctify'd People. *3dly*. They are United unto Jesus Christ. *4thly*. They are a Covenant People, and as such, they are fit Matter for a Church, as being polish'd Stones fit for a spiritual House, or Building; but yet it is not every single, individual Believer that can be call'd a Church, tho' they be Members of the Catholick, or Universal Church,

Church, for so are all the glorify'd Saints above, and that are here below; all that are, have been, and shall be, make up but one Body, whereof Christ our Lord, is Head: But I speak of a particular Church, that which is by the Appointment and Ordination of our Lord Jesus; and that is, a select called People, *sanctify'd by Faith in Jesus, called to be Saints, and are separated from the World, and from all false Doctrines and Worship, that are superstitious, and of human Inventions, with all Ways of false Government, until they be a People dwelling alone; and as such, they imbody, joyn together, unite, and become one in Spirit: And this Union and Oneness consists generally in four Heads.*

1st. Their Agreement and Oneness lyes in those Doctrines, that the Word and Gospel of our Lord holds forth, and reveals unto them: I say, It is the Doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles, whereof Jesus our Lord is the Chief Corner-stone, and by these Doctrines, the Church by Faith built on the Lord of Glory, the Rock of Ages, the Rock on which the Church is built.

2^{dly}. Their Oneness in Spirit consists in Keeping up, and Walking in all the Laws, Ordinances, and Institutions, that our Lord has appointed in his Word for this Church to walk in; and therefore the Apostle exhorts the Church of Corinth, to *keep the Ordinances as he deliver'd them.* 1 Cor. 11.

3^{dly}. This Oneness is in keeping to the Ordinal Rule and Government, which respects the Communion, or Going out of this Church.

4^{thly}. This Oneness is in Walking in their Conversation, as becomes the Gospel, in which they adorn the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour: Not as they covenant, and ingage themselves to our Lord, and to one another, to walk with him in well-pleasing, they become a Church fundamentally, or essentially; that is, 1st. The Being, Essence or Property of a Church. 2^{dly}. It becomes

compleat Organical Church, when all Officers are called and chosen by the Church, so that the Sacraments, and all the Ordinances are dispens'd, and kept up according to the Divine Prescript for Edification and building up of this Church, House, or Temple, 'til it's fit and ready for that House of glory above; and these Things are more clear and evident, concerning this Gospel Church, from those metaphorical Expressions the Holy Ghost is pleas'd to make Use of, comparing it to a House, Temple, Tabernacle, or dwelling Place of Mount Sion, ev'n the Place of his Glory where our Lord himself dwells, and manifests the Glory of his Grace in this his House Temple: And as a House or Temple, has first the Foundation, and then the Structure or Building upon it, even so every Gospel Church has its Foundation and Building, as I have said, and so it's call'd a House, *whose House ye are*; and also a *spiritual House*, elsewhere a Building, *ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's Building*, and also it's said, *be growing up to an holy Temple in the Lord*. Again, Every particular Gospel Church is a fulfilling of Scripture Prophecy, that was foretold in the Time of the National Church, and this is witnessed in many Places, some of which I shall mention upon a double Account, 1st. As it respects a coming into the Church: 2^{dly}. As it respects the glory of God in the Church. In *Isaiah 62.* it's said, *a young Man marries a Virgin, so shall thy Sams marry thee*. Now, how does a young Man marry a Virgin, but into Oneness of Flesh with himself, ev'n Believers when they give up themselves to the Church, they are, or ought to be one Spirit; and this is fulfill'd under the Gospel in the *Gentile Churches*, for it's spoken of 'em in *Isaiah 62.* before-mentioned, *The Gentiles shall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightness of thy Rising*: Which was never fulfill'd 'till the Days of the Gospel. In like Manner, some other Prophecies have a special Regard to

a Gospel Church, in Ezek. 43. Where the Holy Ghost speaks concerning a Church, saying, *If ye be at all ashamed of their Doings, then show them the Pattern of the House, with the Comings in and the Goings out thereof, with all the Laws and Ordinances thereof.* which he gives a full Relation of a true Church under the Gospel; as to the Matter, Form and Manner thereof: And as to the Coming into this House he gives a strict Charge in Ezek. 44. *That no uncircumcised or polluted Person should enter into the Sanctuary of the Lord;* even so under the Gospel it's more fully accomplish'd, in that Charge and Care all Churches have upon 'em, in receiving none who are scandalous, ignorant, erroneous or prophane, into Fellowship and Communion, as the Apostle speaks, *With such an one, no, not to eat;* and, this is far more evident where it is said, *There was daily added to the Church, such who should be saved.* But it was for those who had the Marks of Conversion, who were willingly brought over to the Faith, Government, and Subjection of our Lord Jesus, who dwells in the House or holy Temple. Again, It's evident in 2 Cor. 13. *They gave themselves first to the Lord, and unto his Will of God.* How doth the Soul give up itself unto the Lord? It gives up itself into Union and Communion with the Lord; even so when a Soul enters into a Church, it gives up itself into Union and Communion with that Church: Again, the Apostle exhorts the Church in Rom. 15. 7. *Let us receive one another as Christ hath also received us to the Glory of God.* Now how doth our Lord Jesus receive us, but into Union and Communion with himself? even so the Church receives Members into Union and Communion with itself. From which we may safely conclude, that Members of Churches are not only in Covenant with the Lord, but with one another, and that is, by giving and receiving of them, which becomes a Covenant either more explicate, or more implicate, and answers that

hese before quoted, *As a Young Man marryeth a Virgin, so shall thy Sons marry thee.* The which is a Covenant-Relation to walk with the Lord, and that People in all Gospel Obedience: But,

2dly. It does not only answer Prophecies as to the Matter and Form of Churches; but also the Presence and Glory of God foretold, is fulfilled in Gospel Churches: In *Leviticus 25. I will walk in them, I will set my Tabernacle among them, I will be their God, and they shall be my People;* that is, in a Covenant-Relation. Again, When the Literal Temple was built, which was the Place of Worship for a time, during the Ceremonial Dispensation, God promised his Presence there, and that his *Eyes and Heart* would be there perpetually. *1 Kings 9. 3.* Now all these Promises are more fully accomplished in the Spiritual and Gospel Temple; that is, in every particular Gospel Church: And this is manifest in *2 Cor. 6. 16.* *You are the Temple of the Living God;* and he hath said from that fore-mentioned Place in *Leviticus, I will walk in them, and dwell in them;* and in *Rev. 21. The Tabernacle of God is with Men, and he will be their God, and they shall be his People.* Again, *Rev. 2. 1.* Our Lord is said to *walk in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,* thereby to diffuse and give forth the glory of his Grace and Truth, that shines forth in that Light that is set up in this Golden Candle-stick.

From whence we may observe, that every particular Church of Christ is compar'd to a Golden candlestick: And why so? 1st. Because of those pure and glorious Doctrines, that are held forth, maintain'd, and kept up in this Church. 2dly. From those blessed Laws, Institutions and Ordinances, which this Church walks in, whereby they enjoy communion with the Lord, and with one another. 3dly. From that sweet Order, Government and Discipline kept up, as also from their Conversation, which is becoming the Gospel: Now all things make

it evident, that this is a Church, a Temple, or Golden Candle-stick, where our Lord walks, and dwells.

And if it be so, Why should I, or any other Member, pluck our selves out of this spiritual Building? Why should I break off Communion from the Church, where our Lord dwells?

To which I answer, This is the chief or principal Thing I design; and to know our Duty herein, we are to obey the Voice, or Call of Christ: As there is a spiritual Call, or Voice of our Lord to enter into his House, so there ought to be a Call to go out of it; and this becomes natural from super-natural Operation of Life, I say, it becomes natural for the Sheep of Christ to hear his Voice *John 10. 27. My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them and they follow me. Ver. 5. A Stranger they will not follow, for they know not the Voice of a Stranger.*

Now the Question is, When there this is Voice of Christ, to come out of this House?

To which I answer, That when the Foundation of this House is shaken, or when the Building is shatter'd, broken, or fall'n down; that is, when the Golden Chain of Gospel Doctrines is broken, let loose, and traml'd under; when seducing Doctrines and damnable Heresies are set up in the Church, or when superstitious Worship and humane Inventions in its Laws and Government are set up when it becomes an Harlot, betrays the Marriage Bed, is guilty of spiritual Whoredom, the Lord may then send his Prophet, as he did to the Church of Old; *Wherefore O Harlot, hear the Word of the Lord.* In this Case, it is Time for those who are spiritual minded, to bethink themselves what to do; for here is real Matter and Cause for Light and Conviction to work upon, here is a Voice or Call of Christ to leave this House; because he himself will leave it, and make this House like *Shiloh*, and like the Temple of *Jerusalem*, where his Name was pre-

ed, and his Glory manifested; yet in the Time of their Idolatrous Abominations he forsook it, and fled; as he says in *Jeremiah 12. 7. I have left my House, I have forsaken my Heritage, I have given the dearly beloved of my Soul into the Hands of her Enemies.* But on the other hand, while the Church retains her Purity, keeps close to her Head, the Lord of Glory; for where the Head is, the Body must be; when Judah rules with God, and is faithful with the saints, then there is no Call, or Voice of Christ to leave this House; and therefore, it is a prevailing Temptation with my Corruption, that causes a Rent or Breach in this House; I call it a Temptation, because there is no real Matter for Conviction to work upon, so long as the Church keeps up her Purity in Doctrine, Worship and Practice.

Obj. 1. But it may be objected, Suppose I go from one Church to another, where is the Evil of it?

Ans. I answer, 1st. It is a Breach of Covenant; for as you gave up your self to the Lord, so you gave your self to the Church, which giving becomes a Covenant, and God will require it of us. 2^{dly}. It is a Breach of all Communion and Fellowship, which the Covenant doth engage you in. 3^{dly}. It is sinful, because you have no Call; if you have a Call to joyn in it, you have no Call to go from it, because our Lord dwells there. 4^{thly}. You cut your self off from all Relational Duties: There are not only Personal Duties, but Relative Duties incumbent on Church-Members.

Obj. 2. Others may object and say, That tho' the Church do not leave any Ordinances, yet they alter the Time of the Ordinances.

Ans. To this I answer, That we have no positive Precept for any Set-Time of the Day or of the Night; but it is left to the Wisdom and Discretion of the Church. We find, that in the first Gospel Church, it's said, *They continued daily*

in the Apostles Doctrine, Fellowship, Breaking of Bread and Prayers; yet we do not find what Time of the Day they did break Bread; which makes it more clear, that the Time is left to the Church. Hence I would infer, That if Presidents and Examples be our Precepts, then I know no Church this Day extant, that keeps close unto it at all Times; and that because our Lord did celebrate the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper in the Night; and therefore the Apostle in giving forth the Institution, when he administer'd this Sacrament, brings in his Authority which is, that the Lord Jesus, the same Night in which he was betray'd, took Bread: Now if this become a Precept, it ought always to be in the Night, which is not the Practice of any Church I know of in Summer Time, while the Days are long; but yet as to Practice, we do not find any stated, limited, particular Hour, either in the Day, or Night, in which it was perform'd. This we find Acts 20. *When the Disciples came together on the first Day of the Week to break Bread Paul preached, and continued his Speech 'till Midnight. At which time a young Man fell down from the third Loft and was taken up dead: After which Paul took him up and presented him to his Mother alive, and then went up and after he had broken Bread and eaten, and talked long while, even till Break of Day, he departed.* By all which, it seems, that Breaking of Bread was after Midnight, or in the Morning; which we do not find practiced in any Church of our Lord. But this is certain, that it is the Glory of all Churches, to keep as close and near to the Institution as possible may be; but as there is no Precept for any particular Hour, so the Altering the Hour is no way derogatory from, or lessening to the Institution. We desire to bless God for that Power and Presence have found since the Time was alter'd; and tho' it be not so convenient for some, 'tis hard if we can deny our selves in such a small Matter; and if not how shall we deny our selves in greater? but

ing as this, and other Ordinances are kept up, far
it from me to leave a Church, or Temple, where
ur Lord himself doth dwell.

Object. 3. But it may be objected, Suppose the
stitor of the Church be dead, why may not I go
f then?

Ans. I answer, there is no Call for it, for the
church is the same in its Foundation and Struc-
ure; pray and wait in God's Way only, in the
se of Means with the Church, 'till the Lord in
is Providence call another to be placed and fixed
ith it: But suppose I am called to another Part of
he Country to live, it may be an hundred Miles
f, if it be more or less, can I keep up my Com-
munion in the Church? To which I answer, here's
ecessity; we must submit to the Voice of God's
rovidence, as well as be subject to the Voice of his
recepts; God is able to make up by the secret of
is Presence, what I want in public Ordinances, and
am under the Prayers and Concernments of the
church, and my Union and Love is the same tho'
bsent from it. But if I am cast, by Providence, in-
o a Place, where there's a pure Gospel instituted
church, I may desire a Letter of Recommendation,
nd that because of Necessity; here's a providential
all or Voice of God unto it, and this was my own
ase about four and thirty Years ago. Now I come
o the main substantial Consequence of all, and that
o urge, and give some Reasons, why Members
f a Gospel Church, should not separate, and break
hemselves off from it.

And my *first Reason* is this, because the Lord him-
self dwells there; *Ezek. 48. 35. And the Name of*
that City shall be, the Lord is there. Now this, as I have
aid, has a principal Respect to its full Accomplish-
ment in a Gospel Day; as he hath said, *I will dwell in*
them, and walk in them; that is, in the House, or
Temple, that is called by my Name. Now if it be
o, why should I separate my self from that City or
House,

House, so long as the Lord himself dwells there. But,

Secondly, To rend my self from this House, or Temple, must needs be a great Offence, to the Lord himself, who tells us, *Mat. 11. 6.* That *who soever shall not be offended in him are blessed*; in which we are to understand, our being offended does not respect his divine Person only; but also when we turn our Backs, or fall off from any fundamental Truth, or practical Obedience that bears the Name or Authority of our Lord upon it: Now to break the Union, Communion and Fellowship of a pure Gospel Church, is to offend him, whose divine Presence dwells in the midst of that Golden Candlestick; but *Blessed is he who shall not be offended in me* saith our Saviour.

Thirdly, It gives Offence to the whole Church, and our Lord tells us, that *Offences must needs come* but *Woe unto them by whom they come*.

Fourthly, Another Reason, why Church Members should not forsake the Church, is, because it makes Way for the breaking of all Churches whatsoever; for if that Temptation that prevails upon one more, should prevail over every one, what would become of the Church; for you must know, that the Temptations of that wicked one do not run all in one Vein or Channel; for he that prevails upon some to go one Way, might prevail upon others to go another Way; some might be tempted to go to some other Church, others to some other Way of Worship, others to stay at home and read good Books, others to walk in the Fields, and others might take up with sinful Courses; so that if the Practice of some thro' the Power of Temptation did prevail upon all, what would become of this spiritual House or Building? this would make a Church of Christ no better than the Building of *Babel*, even a Heap of Confusion; so that the profane World might well cry out and say, What's become of all their hot and

zealous Profession, here were mighty Preaching, Prayers, Singing of Psalms, Sacraments; here were holy Conferences, Communion and Fellowship one with another in all their Ways, but see what are become of them, they are all come to nothing; they were but a fickle, crazy-brain'd, giddy headed, unsettl'd People, and therefore, they are all come to nothing; and just Cause they have to say so. But, Fifthly, Another Reason, why Members should not break their Communion with the Church, is, because it is the Work of Satan to make Divisions and Heresies in the Church, according to that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 11. 18, 19. where he tells the Church, *There must be Heresies among them*; as if he should say, it must of Necessity be so, for it pleases God of his sovereign Will for his own Glory, to suffer Satan to make Divisions in a Church, to sow Tares among the Wheat; and why so, but for this End, to make manifest those who are approved among them. From all which we may note, That there is a Tempting Devil, even in a Church of Christ.

Sixthly, To forsake or break off Communion with a Church, discovers a Losing the Exercise of their discerning Faculty, which is the Fruit of a sleepy Conscience: The Saints of Christ in Fellowship with him, have a more quick Sight and Apprehension than others have, to discern betwixt Light and Darkness, Truth and Error, Sin and Duty; now when there is a Leaving off all Covenant, or Relational Duties, 'tis a Sign that Conscience is quiet and asleep; and the Reason is, because the in-dwelling Presence of the Holy Ghost withdraws his Light, and then Conscience quickly falls asleep, so that the Members of Christ had need take Care of their sleepy Conscience, and of Losing the Power of their discerning Faculty.

Seventhly, By Falling away from the Church they forsake their Covenant, which is all Relative Duties, wherein they walk with God, and his Elect People,

as Members in all Ways of Worship and Obedience, at all Seasons and Times when called by the Word and Providence; in which Ways this Church is built up in Faith and Love, in spiritual Walking with him until they are ready to be receiv'd unto Glory with himself above; from all which it looks strangely on those, that cast themselves out of the Church, where our Lord himself dwells.

Eighthly, Another Reason, why Members of a Gospel Church should not rend themselves from it, is, because it does oppose, obstruct and break the very End and Design of our Lord's Institution of his Gospel Churches: Now the End of our Lord in Erecting his Church is Union and Oneness of Spirit, upon which all mutual Faith, Love, Communion and Fellowship doth follow; for Union in all the Truths of the Gospel, is the Foundation of all spiritual Communion; but I say, a Separation from a Church makes a Rent in the Union, which frustrates the Design of Christ; and therefore the Apostle in 1 Tim. 3. 15. gives him Counsel, saying, *That thou mayst know how to behave thy self in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the Ground and Pillar of Truth.* From which 'tis evident, that the Apostle had a special Regard to the Union of the Church, or else why does he call it a Pillar, but in respect of its Oneness: From whence we may conclude, that a Church of Christ is a Pillar of Christ, now you know, that a Pillar is every where so compact, cemented, and joyn'd together, that you cannot discern one Part from another, even so ought a Church of Christ to be united, cemented and joyned together, that you cannot discern one Member from another, and this makes good the first Promulgation of Gospel Churches, they were all of one Heart and one Soul. Again, The Apostle Paul to the Church of Corinth, 1 Cor. 1. 10. in his Exhortation, which wholly concerns, or hath Regard to the Union of the Church, and he enforces his Exhortation with

the greatest Argument, that can be produc'd under the whole Heavens, and that is, no less than by the Name of our Lord Jesus; I beseech you, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among you: but that be perfectly joyned together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment. From all which 'tis evident, that we rend our selves, and break off from the Church, we blast the Design of our Lord in his Church, as much as we can; and that is, because he himself dwells there.

Ninthly, and lastly. Another Reason, why Church Members ought not to separate from the Church, is because they run themselves upon the Borders of spiritual Judgments, and sometimes are overtaken by them. Thus we find in 1 John 2, 19. *They went out from us, because they were not of us*: From whence, we find the dreadful Consequence, and that is, that the very first Beginning and Rise of the Antichristian, Idolatrous, and Persecuting Church follow, as it is in the Verse before cited. *There are ev'n now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know this is the last Time. They went out from us, because they were not of us*; that is, they were not of the same Faith, Love, Union, and Oneness of Spirit with us, therefore they went out from us, which was attended with spiritual Judgments upon the Heart, and became final Apostates. How dreadful is it, therefore, to be given up to Temptation! And who knows but when a small Temptation does prevail, greater may; For how great a Matter doth a little kindle: When little Temptations overcome, greater will; if God of his Mercy prevent not. We have many dismal Stories of this kind, but that of Cain is most remarkable, as being the most publick Head and Representative of the Corrupt, Apostate, and Persecuting Church, as Righteous Abel both represent unto us the True Spiritual Church; these two are constant standing Presidents and Examples,

amples, in all Ages and Generations, they are standing Patterns of the True and Faithful Church, and also of the Apostate and Persecuting Church; the both come to worship God by Way of Sacrifice *Abel's* accepted, but *Cain's* rejected: And why? Because *Cain* failed in two Things which *Abel* had. 1st. In Respect of the Matter. And 2^{dly}. In Respect of the Manner of Worship. 1st. As to the Matter, *Abel* brought of the Firstlings of the Flock, and of the Fat thereof, which was the best he could offer: wherefore he was accepted. 2^{dly}. As to the Manner, he offer'd it in the Faith of another; his Eyes were fixed upon the great Sacrifice that was to come, even the Blood of the Person of Christ, which is the Atonement, and brings Peace with God and ourselves; so that in both these Respects he offered a more acceptable and excellent Sacrifice than *Cain*, by which he had Testimony that he pleased God: Now *Cain* failed in both these, and being under Conviction and Trouble, he proceeds further, and instead of reforming and turning, falls a persecuting unto Death, cutting off the Righteous Seed, that there might be no more a Church of Christ upon Earth; all which was done in Hypocrisy, and ended in final Apostasy. Whereupon he went out from the Presence of the Lord, that is, out of the Way of Church Blessings, or any peculiar Manifestations of God's Love and Favour, or any spiritual Good to his Soul, and was left to the Torments and griping Pangs of a guilty Conscience of unpardon'd Sin.

To conclude, therefore, whenever any Member departs out of a Church of Christ, they had Need to examine themselves more than ever, whether they do not with *Cain*, go out of the Presence of the Lord, and we do not know what may be the dismal Consequences of it. Examine further, if the Church have Union and Communion with our Lord and one another, then say, Oh! How can I answer the forsaking or breaking off my Union or Communion with this Church?

Object. But some may object, That a Church is such Confinement, so as to be thought a Prison. *Ans.* To which I answer, far be it from any man in Fellowship to think or speak so: Can I call that a Prison wherein Christ dwells; wherein is that Communion with him, which is the Fore-runner of that Communion above? Can that be call'd a Prison, which is the most glorious and transcendent Liberty, whereby all the Promises, Graces and Blessings of the New Covenant are giv'n and exhibited as Seals of his everlasting Love, which is far above the greatest Blessing in any other Way on this Side of that Perfection of Glory above.

But I shall conclude with some short Inference by way of Application, and the *First* is a Word of Caution. If it be so, that there are such evil Consequences and Effects in forsaking a Church, then let none think it a small Matter, or an indifferent thing, to leave, or cut themselves off from a Gospel Church, while it is in their Power to keep up their Union and Communion with it; I would add to that in *Jonah 2. 8.* *They that observe lying Vanities, forsake their own Mercy.* Let us first have a care, that while we take up our own Conceptions, abstract or separate from the Divine Will made known in his Word, we do not lose or strip ourselves of spiritual Blessings. But, *2dly.* We had best take Care, and be very jealous and suspicious, that while we forsake the Church, we do not forsake the Rock of the Church, according to them of old, *They forsook God that made them, and lightly esteemed the Rock of their Salvation.* From hence I would note, That to slight, or little esteem, or neglect a True Gospel Church, is to slight or neglect the Rock of that Church. Again, It's said, *They all spake of that spiritual Rock, and that Rock that follow'd them was Christ; but with many of them God was not well pleas'd, for they fell in the Wilderness:* And why so, but because they forsook the Doctrine, Worship, or

Practice of the Church; to prevent which, I would give a Word of Counsel, or Instruction to my self and all Church Members. And,

First, Keep close to God in all spiritual Duties of Worship; to walk in a Way of Duty is the Way of God's being with us, according to that Prophecy of Obed, 2 Chron. 15. 2. ----- *The Lord is with you while you are with him, and if ye seek him he will be found of you*: And herein lyes a great Part of Divine Wisdom, to keep with God in Duty, to fill up Time with all spiritual Duties; that is, all Personal and Relative Duties: Relative Duties respect our Families and Church Worship, in a more peculiar manner to keep up all Ordinances of Worship in the Church, at all Seasons, when called thereunto by the Church, as in Heb. 10. 25. *Not forsaking the assembling of your selves together, as the Manner of some; but Exhorting one another*. And herein there are manifold Mercies and Blessings attending this Walking with God in a way of Duty. As, 1st. 'Tis a Means to prevent our Apostacy, Backsliding, Falling away from our Lord Jesus Christ. 2^{dly}. 'Tis a Means of keeping up all Moral and Natural Duties, that respect our Neighbour's secular Employments and Worldly Business. 3^{dly}. 'Tis a Means to overcome, or conquer the prevailing Power of Temptation, that obstructs, or hinders our Perseverance in the Way of Grace. And 4^{thly}. To walk in all Duties is the Way of all Conveyance of the Influence and Communication of all Grace; whereby the New-Creature Life is maintain'd and increased. And this leads me to a second Head.

Secondly, Endeavour and seek after inward Purity more than outward Sanctity; all spiritual Duties are but poor and profitless, they are empty and good for nothing without an inward Spring of spiritual Life: We must seek after inward Power more than outward Practice, or else all the Lustre of shining Light in outward Duty will perish for ever there

Therefore there must be a Wheel in the middle of the Wheel; though that Place doth principally respect God's providential Government of the World, with all the secret Purpose and Counsel of God in those secret Chances, Revolutions, Turnings and Overturnings of all the outward Works and Transactions; the Actions and Designs of Men in the World, which is as it were a Wheel in the middle of a Wheel; upon which the Prophet speaks, *It was cry'd in my Ear, O Wheel!* that is, O wonder and admire, and be astonish'd at the Wonders of God in his providential Government of the World! *How unsearchable is his Wisdom, and his Ways past finding out!* But this may also refer to the Life of a Christian, there must be the secret Movings of Life, those spiritual Breathings of Faith, Love and heavenly Desires after Jesus, this is the inward Wheel of Divine Motion in the midst of the outward Wheel of visible Duty; and therefore, upon this Account *the Soul may cry, O Wheel!* O wonder at this Grace of Life, that this secret Beam of Glory should be confer'd on me, who am the least and worst of Men that lives upon this Earth in my self! And thus the secret or hidden Work of Grace is, or should be the Wonder of the World! And if so, how should we labour after Grace more than Gold, and that because all Duties are but as Shadows or empty Shells; but Grace is, *1st.* The Substance that fills them: All Shadows will vanish, but the Substance of the internal Life of Grace will abide for ever. But, *2dly.* The indwelling Presence of the Grace of Life is the only Preservative in the Hour and Power of Darkness; that is, in the Time of greatest Tryal and Danger. Again, *3dly.* The indwelling Grace of Jesus, is that whereby all the Truths of Christ are deeply rooted in the Heart; as the Heart is deep, so Deceit and Wickedness are deeply rooted there, till the Truths of Christ take up their Dwelling in the Bottom of the Heart, in the Secrets of the Soul,

to

to dispel that Deceit, Darknes, and Wickednes that dwell there. Again, Those Truths of Christ dwelling in the Heart, keep it from altering its Course, or changing its Way from one Profession to another that is corrupt, from one Church to another which is a Means of Confusion, if practicable. The Lord therefore complains of his Church of old, *Wagdest thou about to change thy Way? Why forsake thou one Church to joyne with another? But of this I have spoke before.*

Lastly, I shall conclude with this Motive, That to hold out and hold on in Grace and Duty, is good Evidence and Witness of our being in Christ, and a compleat fulfilling of all Promises, the blessed Issue and Event of them, as we find often, *He that is faithful, and be thou faithful unto Death, And that overcometh, shall inherit all Things:* Thus let all the Churches of Christ live, and grow up in him *Who is the Head of all Things to his Church;* that he only might have the Preheminence: *And then it may be said,* Happy art thou O Church, or Churches, O People, saved of the Lord, built up in Jesus, who is the Shield of thy Help, the Sword of thy Excellency, thine Enemies shall be found Lyars unto thee, and will be found deceived at the last, when the Church is perfect in Glory.

Further Description

OF A

Gospel Church

In Seven Particulars.

THERE remains a Further Testimony, or Clear Witness and Evidence to the True Property, Essence or Being of a Church, and therefore, according to my present Light, I shall unfold the Meaning of some Words, with which I began to speak. Words without the Sense of them, leave the Mind as dark as ever.

I begun with this first Particular, That when and wherever, there is a Church of Christians, they are called by a particular Call of God: So says the Apostle, *Ye are the called of God in Christ Jesus.* And in *1. Pet. 1. 15.* *As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye in all manner of Conversation.* Again, *1. Pet. 2. 9.* *He hath called you out of Darkness into his marvelous Light.* These and many other Places witness to what I say, that a Church is called out of the rude Mass, or confused Heap of worldly Rubbish, they are brought out of that woful and cursed State of spiritual Death, Soul-Death. We are all by Nature under the Curse, and Condemnation of the righteous Law, as the Apostle, *We by Nature are Children of Wrath,* as others; and this remains until the internal Word, Call, or Voice of Christ reaches the dead, and brings it to Life: And who can raise the

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Dead,

Dead, but he, who is the Lord of Life; and this Word, therefore, that our Lord has spoken, is, and must be fulfill'd in every living Member of his Church, *The Time is coming, and now is, that the Dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live;* and if so, there must be a Resurrection in this Life, then *Blessed are they that have part in the first Resurrection, on such the second Death hath no Power.* This, therefore, must be done in every saved Soul: it must be raised from Death to Life, and this is done by the internal Power and Voice of Christ in the Heart; but now under this Particular, we must consider a twofold Call: There is the outward and visible Call, and the invisible, which is a little spoken to: The outward Call is by the Ministry, or Preaching of the Word and Gospel, which ordinarily has the Spirit going along with it; *For the Letter killeth but the Spirit giveth Life.* This outward Call by the Spirit, therefore, makes a great Alteration in the Mind, for it sets up Light in the intelligible Faculty, and cuts off the outward Acts of Wickedness, renews the Conversation in many Things, so that with *Herod and Saul*, there's another Heart; but not a new Heart: For all this While they were Enemies to the Life and Power of Holiness in Heart, and that because there was no Change in the Habit, or Disposition of the Soul; that is, the Word and Spirit did not take deep Rooting, whereby to bring over the whole Powers of the Soul, to be espoused to and made one with our Lord Jesus Christ. This blessed, glorious, and spiritual Union is not made up between Christ and them, and, therefore, the New-Creature Life of Faith and Love is wanting whereby the Soul doth live in Jesus, and he in them. And this I take, to be the very Case of the foolish Virgins; they were Members of a True Church, forasmuch as they bore the same Profession, and the same Name that the wise had, for they are called *Virgins*; which is the Name giv'n to the Church

ten in Scripture, both in the Old and New Testa-
 ment. *I have espoused you as a chaste Virgin unto Christ,*
 saith the Apostle to the Church of Corinth. And in
 the Revelations they are called *Virgins*, that follow the
 Lamb, whosoever he querth. And again, in the first
 of Canticles, they are called *Virgins*; which denotes
 to us the Purity and Chastity of a True Church.
 But why do's our Lord call them *Virgins*, seeing
 they were meer rotten-hearted Hypocrites, and he
 knew them to be such? They are called *Virgins*, in
 that they had the same Profession and outward Pu-
 rity that the Wise had; they set out with the Wise
 towards God, Christ, Heav'n and Glory; they had
 lamps as the Wise had, the same Worship and out-
 ward Obedience with the Wise; they had the same
 Sabbaths, Prayers, Sacraments and Sermons that the
 Wise had, and while the Bridegroom tarried, they all
 slumber'd and slept, Wise as well as Foolish; and thus
 they held 'till the Midnight-Cry, *Death and Judge-*
ment. Then there's great searching of the Heart, they
 seek for Pardon, Peace and Love, but find it not;
 they find themselves to be outwardly the Friends
 of Christ, but inwardly Enemies to the Glory of
 Grace in Christ; they find they were only Mem-
 bers, but not Members of Christ; for all this time
 they wanted the indwelling Presence of the Holy
 Spirit, whereby to unite their Souls by Faith and
 Love into Union, and Communion with the Lord
 Jesus. From all which We may learn, That the pu-
 rest Church may have many a dreadful Hypocrite
 in it, and yet the Church no Way blame-worthy,
 because they only see the outward Appearance, but
 cannot see into the Heart. Again, There may be a
 fair and beautiful Profession without, and yet a
 Worldly, Brutish Spirit may rule in the Heart:
 From what has been said, it appears, that there is
 an Outward Call that ends in Eternal Death, and
 our Lord tells us, that *Many are called, but few*
are chosen; many are call'd outwardly, but not in-
 wardly.

wardly. In this Place, and that of the foolish Virgins, I think, there's the loudest Call that's possible to all Members of Churches, to strive and endeavour to make their Calling and Election sure, and to be sincere, that they may be found of him in Peace. But

Secondly, As a Church becomes so by a Call of Grace, so by a Work of Sanctification; this is the immediate Effect of Justification: For a justified State preceeds Sanctification, and Vocation's before 'em both. The first Work of God, that proceed from eternal Mercy, and the good Pleasure of God is our Calling; as in 1 Per. 2. 9. *Who hath called us out of Darkness, into his marvelous Light.* And when we all are before our Calling, we may see in the Glasse of the Scriptures: In Psalm 14th, Isaiah 59th, Romans 3d, Ephesians 2d Chapters. These and many other Places discover our woful State of Miserie, Sin, and Rebellion against the Lord of Glory, until the Call of Grace reaches the Heart, and brings it near to himself, thro' his redeeming and most precious Blood; upon which efficacious and powerful Call, all the Springs of heavenly Grace flow in to the Soul, and dwell there, and as such they are fit Subject Matter of a true Church. And having those Seeds and Plants of New Covenant Grace, they come under those blessed Promises, as in Psalm 92. *They that are planted in the House of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God; they shall live and bring forth Fruit in Old Age, they shall be fat and flourish.* And in the New Testament they are said to grow in, b. m. *to be built up in him*, who is the Head of all Grace and Influence; but if they be not implanted in Jesus, how shall they grow up in him? if the Foundation of the House be not well laid, how can the House be built up? So if we are not planted in the Likeness of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, how shall we be built up in him? it follows, therefore, of Necessity that Calling and Sanctification must go before the

can be any Foundation, Essence, or Being of a Church.
 Thirdly, As they are a Church by Calling, and
 Sanctification, so they are by Covenant. All the
 Churches of our Lord are such by a real, sincere,
 and invisible Covenant: There's a twofold Cove-
 nant between God and his People; the one is more
 outward and visible; the other is more internal and
 invisible; the visible Covenant is first by Infant-Bap-
 tism, when the Child is given up unto God, the Fa-
 ther, Son, and Spirit; and by this the Covenant of
 God is upon them: And this Covenant sometimes
 is renew'd, when they grow up to Maturity, Know-
 ledge, and discerning of Good and Evil; it may
 then be renew'd between God and themselves, by
 secret Prayer, or Fasting, and also in public Ord-
 inances, as Fast-Days, the Ministry of the Word,
 and Prayer; and yet we find, that with many of
 them God is not well pleased, for they are over-
 grown in the Wilderness, because their Heart is
 not right with God, neither are they steadfast in his
 Covenant: And this is too evident, daily, by woful
 Experience, for how many that have been baptiz'd,
 run into all Manner of Wickedness, Cursing, Drun-
 kenness, Covetousness, Sabbath-breaking, Lying and
 Cheating, and what not, casting off the Covenant
 of God, rejecting his Laws, trampling his Grace un-
 der Feet; all which is manifest, that the Cove-
 nant is outward and visible, being more a Work
 than Grace, depending on the Creatures Obedience:
 But the Covenant that is internal and spiritual, de-
 pends wholly upon sovereign Grace, free Promise,
 the sure Mercies of David, or the holy Things of
 Jesus, according to that in *Isaiah 55. 3. Hear, and*
your Soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting Cove-
nant with you; ev'n the sure Mercies of David: Or, as
 he said, the holy, or good Things of Jesus, that he
 has bought with his own Blood. From hence we
 may observe, that God's internal, or invisible Co-
 venant, is sealed up unto the Soul, in the Use of

external, or outward Means, from those Words *Hear, and your Souls shall live.* And therefore, the many make a direful, and dismal Use of their Baptismal Covenant, and further Engagements, as to become Reprobate Silver, whom the Lord rejects yet let none, for this cause, neglect, or cast off the Means of Divine Institution, because they are God's Methods of Conveying Grace into the Heart; and therefore, What know we, but that in giving up a Child in Baptism, God may give internal Grace Pardon and Life for ever: Or, What know we, but that in Prayer, Fasting, or Hearing the Word, Grace may flow into the Heart. Again, Let none, therefore, limit the Holy One of *Israel*, nor think, that he is bound to any outward Sign, or Seal of the Covenant; God is Sovereign, and Free-Agent of his own Grace, and therefore, we are bound to keep in his Way, and seek Pardon and Grace from himself; for if all baptized Persons were for ever saved then the worst of Apostate Sinners would be so, that they live and dye in all manner of Wickedness which is no less than Blasphemy against the Grace and Holiness of God. Now I would speak something to the other Part of the Covenant, which is more inward and spiritual, this is the *Everlasting Covenant*, ordered in all things, and sure; which all the Churches of the Saints are brought into; this is that Marriage Covenant made between Christ and all his Churches, as in *Hosea 2. 19*, *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in Righteousness, Judgment, Loving Kindness and Mercy.* This is fully accomplished in that Day and Time, when God the Father actually gives the Church into the Bosom of his Christ; for all and every Church is the Gift of God unto his Son; for None can come unto him, but whom the Father draws, and he will raise them up at the last Day. Now this Church of our Lord Christ, is not only the Father's Gift in Time, but before all Worlds; before any Creature in the first World was made

made; 2 Cor. 5. 19. *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Tresses;* the Meaning is, that God was in Christ reconciling the World of his Church and People to himself; therefore, we are to understand, that the Church was virtually and really given of God the Father unto Christ, in that Covenant Transaction and Agreement, that passed between the Father and the Son, even the Covenant of Redemption that God did enter into with Christ: And as God enter'd into Covenant with Christ alone, so he is call'd the Covenantant himself to his Church and People; *I have given him for a Covenant to the People,* saith the Lord; that is, the Covenant of the People God-ward himself, who is the Worth of his Church, or the Conditions of his Church himself, in that he has perform'd the whole Conditions of the Covenant of Redemption himself, even in his own Person. And as he is the Covenantant himself, so he is the Head, and the Object of his Father's Love, Choice, and Election, and as the Church is given to him, so, as the Apostle saith, *they are chosen in him before the Foundation of the World,* that is, virtually; but actually they are giv'n to him at the Time of Conversion, or New Birth, when the heav'nly Nature is planted in them, and they are truly implanted into Jesus; this is the Time of God's internal, spiritual Covenant with his Church, as they are in Christ; God, therefore, will not enter into Covenant with fall'n Man as he is in himself; since Man has broken the first Covenant he will not trust him with a second, he will not have any thing to do with Man in a Covenant Way of Transacting, as he is in himself a cursed Creature under Condemnation, but God will enter into Covenant with his Church, as they stand related to Christ; that is, as they are related to, and in Oneness with the Lord Christ, so he dwells in them in this spiritual, invisible Covenant; for this is the Tenor of it, *I will walk in them, even in them; and I will be their God,*

and they shall be my People; and all this is as they are in Christ: So as he is in them, and they in him, they appear before God in Christ, in all their Acts of Worship, both publick and private; they draw nigh to God in Christ, and he draws nigh to them to give them all Peace, all Spiritual Graces, and heavenly Blessings, which are in Christ Jesus: This is the Fruit of God's Everlasting Covenant with his Church, as they are in Christ he dwells in them. But here I may stop, and wonder, and let every Member of Christ wonder, and cry out with Solomon *But will God in very deed dwell with Men on Earth; behold the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him: yet will God dwell in such a filthy, wretched, earthly Heart as mine?* I answer, Yes, if in Christ, he will dwell in the Heart, to purge, refine and purify the Sons of Levi, that they may offer a pure Offering unto the Lord in Righteousness. But,

Fourthly, As they are a Church by Calling, Sanctification and Covenant, so they are a Church by Dedication and Resignation of their Souls into the Hands of Jesus Christ: This is done at their first Covenant with God in Christ, they soul their Souls up on the Lord Jesus, to be his in all Sincerity and Truth in a Covenant of Promise; and this also they do at their Entering into a Church-Relation, they give themselves to the Lord: And this is also renewed at the Lord's Table, they dedicate and give up their Souls and Bodies into the Hands of Jesus to be his for ever in Covenant. And not only in these Times, but it becomes a practical Duty, daily both in Family-Worship and secret Retirement they resign their Souls unto him; this was David's Practice, *Into thy Hand, O Lord* (saith he) *I commit my Spirit.* And why, but because thou hast redeemed it. This is also practical in Times of Suffering and Persecution, if any Man suffer according to the Will of God, let him commit himself into the Hands of him, as unto a Faithful Creator; but more espec

ly, at the Time of Death: Thus did the Prote-
Martyr Stephen, *Lord Jesus, Receive my Spirit*; this is,
therefore, very practical in all Churches, to give
themselves to the Lord. Again, *allowb bio. 1. 20*
Fifthly, They become the Churches of Christ by
their Separation, and Sequestration from the World,
and the Men of the World; according to the A-
postle, *Come out from among them, be ye separate, touch*
no unclean Thing, and I will receive you. But what is
meant by the unclean thing, that the Church must
separate from? This Word, *unclean*, misre-
fer both
to Doctrine, Worship, and Practice. 1st, When the
Doctrine and Ministry of the Word leaves the Peo-
ple under the filthy State of old Nature, or under
the Renewings of Moral Nature into good Works,
and Duties, yet it is but old Nature still, and there-
fore, is unclean. Again, When the Word brings up
Nature into legal Worship and Obedience, in some
Measure agreeable to the Moral Law, and rests
there, this is a muddy and unclean Doctrine, for it
falls short of an heavenly Power of the New Birth;
Behold thou art a Jew, and restest in the Law, and makes
thy Boast of God. 2^{dly}, When the Word and Doctrine
set up free Will to be Co-Partners with free Grace;
or to be equal Sharers in free Grace; this is muddy
Doctrine. Or 3^{dly}, When they bring in Works to
be Contributors, or helpful in the Matter of Justifi-
cation, to the Throne or Court of God's Justice;
this is all unclean Doctrine, that the Church must
separate from. Again, As to Worship; when there's
a mixing of Divine and Humane Laws together,
when Old Traditions are set up equally with Divine
Institutions; this also is unclean, and must be sepa-
rated from: And as to Practice, if there be no Dif-
ference between the Precious and the Vile, between
the Holy and Profane; this is unclean in Govern-
ment and Practice, which the Church should sepa-
rate from. Our Lord calls *Peter, Cephas*, which signifies
Stone; that is, a living or fit Stone, for a spiritual
House

House or Building; even so, every Church ought to be compos'd of spiritual and living Stones, which are fit Matter for that House, and Temple, where our Lord dwells. Again,

Sixthly, They are not only a Church by the foregoing named Particulars, but also by their Holiness; *Willing that which no Man shall see the Lord; they are holy in Manner of Conversation, they worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness.* Now this Holiness is twofold: 1st, It respects all the Laws of our Lord Christ, which are the extrinsic and visible Rules of Obedience. All the prescribed Laws are the Path-Way, or travelling Way of the Church, in their Obedience to the Lord, upon which he hath promised his Presence with them to the End of the World, *Mat. 28. 20. Teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded, and Lo! I'm with you always, ev'n to the End of the World.* This is the extrinsic Holiness of the Church, for as the Laws of the Church are holy, they are called holy, just, and good; because he, who is Holiness itself, is the Author of them. 2^{dly}, Their Holiness lies in the inward Frame, and Temper of the Heart, where must be an holy, humble, heavenly Heart, else all their Worship is but outward and hypocritical. The true Spouse, therefore, of our Lord, hath a twofold Holiness, answerable to the twofold Worship of Christ, who is said to be *The Head over Things to his Church*; and as such, he is not only the Head of Government by a visible Law, but he is the Head of all Influence, and that is by Operation or Communication of his Spirit, the Shining of his Grace in their Souls. This, and this only, is the Beauty of Holiness, and Glory of the Church, the indwelling Grace of the Spirit, is that whereby he dwells in the Church, and they in him; this is the inward Glory of Grace, that bears Witness of the true Sanctification, and makes good those Words *The King's Daughter is all glorious within*; of which the Tabernacle of old was a Shadow, which was men-

and homely without, cover'd with Badgers Sins;
but within rich and glorious: So is the Church mean
without, but pure within; *Blessed are the pure in Heart,*
they shall see God. Thus, therefore, a Church is
known by their Holiness.

Seventhly, The Church is denominated, by the Ho-
ly Ghost, to be a Royal, or holy Priesthood: in *Re-*
velations, they are called twice, both *Kings and Priests*
unto God, and his Father. But how are they said to be
Kings, seeing there is one King, even Jesus, and he
alone is their Lord and King, to reiga in them;
and they are subject unto him. We are not, there-
fore, to think, that they are Kings of themselves,
by any Thing they can do, but only by Virtue of
their Lord and King in them, whereby they conquer
the World, Flesh, and Devil, with all their Power
and Policy. Satan, with all his Devices and Subtilty,
trodden under Foot, and the World, and Flesh,
overcome thro' the Power and Presence of Christ
in them. *We are, saith the Apostle, more than Conque-*
rors, thro' him that loved us: That is, more than any
worldly Conqueror. Every true Member of Christ,
the best and greatest, and most victorious Conque-
ror in the World, forasmuch as all their inward E-
nemies are subdu'd, which are more than all their
outward Enemies in the World; in this Respect, there-
fore they may be said to be Kings: But how are they
said to be Priests? In this we are to consider, the
work of a Priest is twofold, 1st, To offer Sacrifices.
2nd, To make Intercession. Now the Sacrifices of
the Church under the Gospel, are Prayers, Interces-
sions, and giving Thanks. This, therefore, is the
work and Practice of the Church, in their daily
approaches to the Throne of Grace, either in Pub-
lic, or Private: It is Part of their daily Worship
to offer up Prayers, Supplications and Thanksgiv-
ings, not only for themselves, but for all in general;
especially for Her Present Gracious Majesty,
that God would please to grant Her Long Life, and

prosperous Reign; and that God would blast, overthrow, and destroy all Her Enemies at Home and Abroad, both Secret and Publick; and that God would bless Her with Everlasting Blessings, and continue Her to be a Nursing Mother to his Church as God has promis'd, and as She is at this Time. They pray also, for all inferior Magistrates, and for the Nations in general, that God would pardon their Sins, and give them Repentance, and work Reformation in them unto Life Eternal. From which 'tis evident, That the Church is not a selfish or private-spirited People, for themselves and none else; they seek not themselves only, but the Good of Others: And if it were not, that the Church do daily cry, wrestle, pray, and make Intercession at the Throne of Grace, the fiery Wrath of Almighty God would soon destroy an Ungodly World; therefore the Church of Christ is a Company of Priests in their Daily and Nightly Approaches at the Throne of Grace, not only for themselves, but for the good of all and every one.

Having thus far gone in the Testimony and Witness of a Church in seven Particulars, I desire a little further to illustrate, and confirm those Truths by some clear and full Texts of Scripture, and the rather because of some other Opinions I have met with that are Strangers to these things thro' a veiled Mind. In the Reading of *Moses*, and of *Christ*; there are Scriptures that give a full Relation of the Essence, Being and Progress of a Church, and its Qualifications. Among which I shall name three.

The First is in *Psalm 40. 10.* *Hearken, O Daughters incline thine Ear, and hear; thou must forsake thy Kindred, and thy Fathers House: That is, thou must renounce the first Adam's Natural Apostacy, his Sin and Wickedness, and also his Filthy Rags of Righteousness, and come unto the second Adam; this imports the Call of the Church. So shall the King greatly desire thy Beauty; this imports the good Beginning*

ning of her Sanctification, and that Christ great-
desires, and delights in the Beauty of his own
race, for it's his own Comeliness put upon her; For
is thy Lord, and worship thou him. This shews that
Jesus Christ is Lord, and King of his Church, and
that it's the proper Work of the Church, to give all
divine Worship unto him. And further, the Beauty
of her Graces in Sanctification is illustrated in these
Words before-named, *The King's Daughter is all glo-*
rious within, her Cloathing is of wrought Gold, she shall be
brought before the King in Rayment of Needle-Work. These
Words *Cloathing* and *Rayment* are Metaphorical Ex-
pressions, and signify to us, the blessed, perfect, and
spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ, wrought out
in his own Person, in which, the Church stands
complete, and actually justify'd, in the Court of
God's Justice. But, Again, as this Psalm doth evi-
dence the Substantials of the Church, so her Quali-
fications, also are further discover'd; as in *Zecha-*
rah 12. 10. *I will pour out the Spirit of Grace, and of*
Application, upon the House of David, and Inhabitants of
Jerusalem. Upon the observing of which, I have
often consulted with Scripture, whether this Pro-
mise is not limited to the natural Seed of David and
Jerusalem; because in reading the Letter of the
Words, it seems, as if 'twere wholly design'd for the
House or Seed of David and Jerusalem; but in com-
paring it with other Scriptures, it's partly fulfill'd in
the Gentile Churches, and will be more fully in the
latter Days, when the Jews shall be call'd; notwith-
standing there are many Prophecies in the Old Testa-
ment respecting the Gentiles, and are fulfill'd in 'em;
when the Lord saith, *I will pour Water upon him*
that is thirsty, I will open Rivers in dry Places, and the
Wilderness shall be a Pool; these and many other
places, must be understood of the Graces of the
Spirit, that's pour'd forth upon the Gentiles in the
Days of the Gospel: And this Promise of the Spirit,
giv'n to the Seed of David, and Abraham, as they
are

are spiritual, and embrace the Call and Voicē of Grace in the Gospel. This, therefore, is the great Legacy our Lord has given to all his Churches, to the End of the World.

But what is here meant by the Spirit, and what by the Spirit of Grace?

By the Spirit, we understand, an operative Power or Work of God upon the Heart; whereby it's enlighten'd and instructed, and many holy and good Things put into it, which were not there heretofore. But what's meant by the Spirit of Grace? I answer, it is called, sometimes, the Spirit of Revelation, the Knowledge of Christ: Sometimes, the Spirit of Wisdom, Faith, Love, Joy, and Peace, as also the Spirit of Prayer and Supplication; these are the Virtues and Graces, with many others, the Spirit's the Author and Worker of, in all the Churches of Christ.

The second Kind is a full Discovery of the Church in 1 John 3. 1. *Behold, take Notice, what Manner Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Children of God.* In which, we may take Notice, 1st. That God's essential or eternal Love, the first moving Cause of his having a Church, and Children. 2^{dly}. That it's Love manifested, displayed and given forth, that is, the working and effecting Cause of his Church; it's Love bestow'd, and spread abroad in the Heart by the Holy Ghost, Romans 5. And therefore the World knows us not, because it knew not him. We need not, therefore, wonder, why the World knows not the Church, the Reason is plain, because they know not him. From whence we observe, that the poor, blind World, neither know the Church nor Christ the Lord and Head of the Church; and therefore, it is, that the most professing Part of the World, gave such wicked, blasphemous Names and Titles to him: Sometimes, they call him *Belzebub*, the Prince of Devils. Again, they tell him he has a Devil, that goes about to kill. Again, they call him *a Glutton, a Wine-Bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners*.

Again, When some said he is a good Man, nay, at say others, *He deceives the People*. Another While they say of him, *He is mad, and hath a Devil, why hear him?* Again, *Say we not well, thou art a Samaritan, and hath a Devil*. Again, They tell him plainly, that he is a *Blasphemer*; because he said, *I am the Son of God*. So that, notwithstanding the Beamings and Shinings forth of his Godhead, in those wonderful Miracles that he did, and in his Ministry, who spake as one having Authority, and as never Man spake; yet they knew him not; yea, tho' they were Abraham's Children, and served God according to the Law of Moses; yet they knew him not. And, the World knew him not, how should they know his Church, who can find out that *hidden Manna*, *White Stone*, and *New Name*, which our Lord gives his Church, in their Overcoming the World, and all Things whatever. But what is meant by the World, that neither know Jesus, nor his Church? By the World, we must understand such, who are taken up with Worldly Matters, and are of worldly Spirits, and for worldly Interest; they love, embrace, and hug the Things of this World in their Bosom; they mind the World, and therefore, they speak of the World, and the World hears them. Hence it is, that they see no Beauty, nor Comeliness in Jesus, so as to desire him; and therefore, he becomes a *Stumbling Block*, and *Rock of Offence* to them. We need not wonder, that as they see no Desirableness, nor Beauty in Jesus, nor his Graces; so they behold not, nor see the Beauty and Glory of those Graces, with which the Church is adorn'd; and therefore, the World knows not the Church, because it knows not him, who is the Fountain of the Church's Grace.

Some will say, yes, we know them very well, whom you call the Church; they are a Sort of People, who make a great Noise of Religion; but are a headstrong, resolute, and giddy-headed People; and not only so, but they are meer Hypocrites, Reprobates, and

and Schismatics from the Ancient Church.

Here I would have you stop a little, and consider and search into this Matter, for it is weighty. Let us, therefore, take heed, lest we pass a false Judgment upon any People. You say, they are an hypocritical, reprobate, giddy-headed People; and may be, they are so; and it may be, they are not so; therefore, we will enquire into those Things.

First, Let us search into the Principles and Doctrines of this People: Do they keep the Apostle Doctrine pure and entire? Are they faithful in all Truths concerning the Trinity, the Person of Christ, his Office of Mediatorship; as also those Doctrines of Effectual Vocation, Justification and Glorification, which we find in *Romans* 8. 29, 30.? Do they retain, and lock up this golden Chain of all Fundamental Doctrines, in the Cabinet of their Bosom? Is not one Link of this glorious Chain dropt off for if one Link be gone, it makes Way for all the rest. And thus it is, with that Old Strumpet of *Rome*, who was once a pure Church, but they have long ago broke the Chain: We do not find, that one Link remains in that Old Harlot, so far she is gone from the whole Substance of pure Doctrine, and also in every thing else: And yet some of our blind Protestants will tell you, they had rather be of the Communion with the *Romish* Harlot, than with those, that keep close to the Gospel Chain of pure Doctrine. The worst, that I wish those pretended Protestants, is, that they be not found superstitious Worshippers in the great Day of God Almighty. Gospel Doctrines are not only the Foundation, but the very Bulwark and Defence of the Church, as also their Progress and Building: As is said of the Primitive Church, they continu'd in the Apostle's Doctrine. But,

Secondly, Follow those People a little Further, look into their Worship: Do they worship God

cordi-

ording to all his Laws and Ordinances, by the Help of the sanctifying Grace of the Holy Ghost? Do they preach, pray, and sing by the Help of the Spirit? for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

Thirdly, Look into their Government: Do they make a Difference between the precious and the vile, between the holy and prophane?

Fourthly, Look into their Lives and Conversations: Are they peaceable, and loving among their Neighbours? Are they honest, just, and righteous in their Dealings? Or, do they not cheat, couzen, or overreach in Trading? Do they not covet what is not their own? Do they not buy Goods, and never pay for them? Or, Borrow Money, and never pay it?

Fifthly, Follow them a little further, Do they walk in all their Relative Duties? Do they worship and glorify God, daily, in their Families? setting apart some Time every Day for Prayer and Thanksgiving. Is not this the Badge, or signal of all Christian Families? and without this we are call'd no better than Heathens. *Jer. 10. last Verse*, says the Prophet, *Pour out thy Wrath upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the Families that call not on thy Name*. This is a great and dismal Sign, that we are dead in Sin, we are not sensible of our daily Sins, so as to be humbled, and beg for Pardon; and of our daily Mercies, so as to return Praise.

Again, Let us enquire further into their secret retirements: Do they not only in Family, but in secret, set apart some time from the World, to search and try their Hearts and Ways, and be humble before the Lord, and pray for Mercy and Pardon. Have we not absolute Necessity for daily Bread? then we have Necessity of daily Prayer. Do we not receive manifold Mercies every Day? then we ought to return manifold Thanks every Day.

Thus by these small Hints, you may partly judge, whether they are a Church, or no: I might have enlarged

enlarged much on every particular Evidence, that is given of a true Church; but I would not be over tedious: Let us therefore, look and search into Parties, Forms, Notions and Opinions, where we find a true Church. Search into the Parochial Assemblies, and see if all the fore-mentioned Particulars be found there: Are they called, sanctify'd, covenanted, dedicated, separated, holy, and a Company of Kings and Priests? Are they full of spiritual Wisdom, and Revelation, in the Knowledge of Christ? Are they full of Peace, and Joy in believing? Are they full of Divine Knowledge, able to admonish one another? *Moses*, the Man of God, gives it as true Evidence of the Church of *Israel*, that they were a *Wise and Understanding People*, *Deut. 4. 6.*

Again, Are they full of spiritual and heavenly Prayer? Is the Minister full of Divine Prayer in the Pulpit, and the People also in their Assemblies? Do they converse one with another, and declare what God hath done for them, in the Work of Conviction and Conversion? Do they discover the Work of Grace, how they were brought to believe in Jesus united to him, and walk in him? Then in the Name of the Lord, keep there, and be fully satisfy'd, that these are the Church and People, whom the Lord dwells in, and whom he will delight to honour.

Again, Are these things found among others, is them be under what Name, or Form, whatever it is, however specify'd? They are the true Church, the City of Solemnities, the *Sion* of God, the *New Jerusalem*, which is from above, and is the Mother of us all: these are they, whom the Lord dwells in, and whom he will delight to honour. From all which, we may easily discern who are the true Church, even such, who are the heaven-born Children of *Sion*, born from above, born of the Spirit, implanted into Jesus, the living and spiritual Vine; these are the blessed ones in this World, these are the only rich, and blessed, and that because they are interested in him, who

is the only Potentate, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; in him, who is the rich Pearl, the hidden Treasure, and true Riches, *Prov. 8. With him is desirable Riches and Righteousness*; his Riches are divine, spiritual, invisible, and everlasting: For which Cause, the Apostle tells us, *Ephes. 3. 8. That the Grace of God was giv'n him, that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ*. From which we may observe, that those Riches, that are in Jesus Christ, are unsearchable: * There is a wonderful Depth, and such mysterious Greatness in them, that all finite Beings, or created Wisdom, can't find the Depth, or discover the Fulness of 'em. 2dly, That the Apostle Paul was sent upon this Account, and for this End and Purpose, to preach up and reveal unto the Church, those hidden Riches and that unsearchable Treasure, that is in Jesus Christ.

Obj. Some may object and say, Had the Apostle nothing else to preach up but Jesus Christ? Is there no other Doctrine but this of Jesus, and the Riches of Jesus?

Ans. Yes, There is the Law of Moses, the convictive and condemning Power of the Law, for the Law discovers Sin, and Guilt by Sin, for which we are under Terror and Condemnation, being found guilty. Paul, therefore, must preach up this as the Fore-runner unto Jesus, *Through the Terror of the Law, we persuade Men*, says he; and *The Law is our School-Master to bring us unto Christ*: Conviction of Sin, is the first Step towards a Christian. Our Lord, therefore, hath promised the Spirit, *which shall convince the World of Sin*; a Minister may, and must preach the holy Law, which we have broken, and yet be no legal Preacher: And why so, but because he doth not stop, or stay there, he neither stops in, or under the Law, as a Covenant, but hastens thro' the Law to Jesus; and the Soul must hasten to get into Jesus, and keep in Jesus. The preaching of the Law, is, as if a Man were in a violent Storm, in a small Vessel tost

led on the Waves, that must hasten into Harbour for Shelter, or be lost. Compare, therefore, the Ministry of the Law, with the preaching of the unsearchable Riches of Christ, it is as nothing; hereby we know, who are the called, and sent Ones into the Ministry, even, those who preach the Gospel of those unseen Riches, that are in Jesus Christ.

But to go on, As Christ is said to be Unsearchable Riches, even so 'tis said, that *In him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.* This is Parallel with the other, and a more full Amplification of what is in Jesus. There is, therefore, not only unsearchable Riches of Wisdom and Grace, but a hidden Treasure of it in our Lord Jesus. Why is it said to be hid in him? seeing he is the infinite, glorious God, who fills Heav'n and Earth, who thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, in whom are all the Perfections and glorious Attributes of God in himself, without Measure, or Limitation, *who is God over all, blessed for ever*; whose infinite, glorious Perfections are incommunicable to any Creature-Being whatever; for he will not give his Glory to another, nor his Praise to graven Images; but tho' there is no Possibility of imparting God's Essential Glory to the Creature, yet we are to understand, there is a communicative Glory, that respects the Mediatorial Office in him, therefore, as Mediator, God-man having taken our human Nature into Personal Union with himself, and in that Nature suffer'd, and also satisfy'd he is, therefore, a perfect and compleat Mediator, and as such, he's a meet Person to be entrusted with all the Riches of Grace, and hid Treasures of Wisdom. In him, therefore, as God-man; there's a Mediatorial Fulness of Wisdom and Grace, which is diffusive, and conveyable to his Church; as Mediator he has a Fulness on purpose for his Church: The Church Triumphant lives in the Fulness of his Glory, the Church on Earth lives in the Fulness of his Grace; for as *in him dwells the Fulness of the God-head*

bodily; So it pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell: For the Law was giv'n by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ; For out of his Fulness, therefore, have all we received Grace for Grace.

From hence observe, That Christ our Lord is the hid Treasure, and Fountain of his Church: There's a Fountain open'd for Sin, and for Uncleanness, our Lord Jesus is this Fountain, in the Merit of his Blood, and by the Infusion and Influence of his Grace on the Heart. How often is he call'd, *The Fountain of Living Waters*, and *Fountain of Gardens*. In *Canticles* 4, & 5 Chap. he tells us, *He is come into his Garden*. From hence observe, That every particular Church is a Garden of our Lord. *A Garden inclosed*, says he, *is my Sister, my Spouse*: that is, A Garden taken out of the wide World, or called out of the Profane and Wicked World. Again, Our Lord is the Fountain, that waters this Gardens; he is the Well of living Waters, that is in every Garden of his Church; and he alone waters those Plants of his own Grace, which he himself hath planted: He it is, that causes every Spring of Grace to grow, and flourish.

Again, As he is the Treasure, Fountain and Fulness of the Church, so there is no living Member of his Church, but they receive some of the Fulness and Riches, that is in Jesus Christ. The least Spark of Sincerity is from the Fountain Jesus, the smallest Spark of Grace, is Part of the Riches and Fulness in him, and he has promis'd, that he will not despise the day of small Things; he will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax; he will nourish his own Grace unto Life Eternal; he will bring forth Judgment and Victory; Wherever there's the least Work of Sincerity discern'd, it makes a Fitness to be receiv'd into the Church; and it would bring Guilt upon the Church, to deny one Communion, that can discover the least Mark or Sign, of the Grace of God begun in the Heart. It was a good Saying of one, that *He*

had rather take in five Hypocrites, than keep out one sincere, humble, penitent Believer. As Grace is a hidden Mystery, so Hypocrisy is a secret, many Times unknown, either to the World, or the Church; but where there's no Work of God upon the Heart, no Change of Nature, no Savour of Christ's Knowledge, made manifest in the Soul, there's no more Right, to enter into to Communion with a Church, than I have to enter into the Ministry, and take upon me to preach, which would be an horrible Temptation from the wicked One; and where there's not the least Work of Grace in Church Communion, it destroys one great Article of our Faith in the Creed, which is Communion of Saints; Now, *What Communion hath Light with Darknes?* or, *Christ and worldly Nature* For the Carnal Mind is at Enmity with God, it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. 'Tis evident, therefore; that a Work of Grace is the Foundation of all Church Communion.

Again, As Christ is the Fulness, and Riches of the Church, by Virtue of his Suffering and Obedience they have all their Help from this Fulness, to walk in God's Law. God has laid Help on one that's mighty, this is Jesus; and he gives out Help to ev'ry Member of his Church, in which, they are strengthened to keep his Law; there's none, that keeps God's Law as the Church does; their Obedience to the Law, from another Spring and Principle than the rest of the World. Their Obedience to Moses's Law is universal, and sincere, tho' not perfect; they walk in the Law, but do not rest in the Law; they walk in the Law, and look unto Jesus by Faith; therefore their Obedience is called, *The Obedience of Faith* in Jesus; they are under the Law in their Faith of Jesus, in whom is all their Salvation.

In the last Place, as our Lord Christ is the Tree of Life, the Head and Fulness of the Church, he alone is exalted in the Church: He is said, to be exalted at the Father's Right Hand, and exalted as a Prince and

Saviour; even thus doth every Church of Christ. He is exalted as Lord and King, as Prince and Saviour, in all their Worship and Obedience, in their Souls and Bodies, which are his: But how much more is he exalted of God, the Father, as the Fruit and Reward of his Death and Passion? Wherefore, God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name, above every Name. Again, He'll be more exalted in his Church, when the Romish Harlot is taken out of the Way, and expelled out of the Earth, when the Kingdoms of this World shall become the Kingdoms of our God, and of his Christ, then, even then, he will shew himself, who is the only Potentate, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who dwelleth in Light incomprehensible. Thus let all the Churches of Christ give Glory to, and exalt him, throughout all the Ages of Eternity, World without End. Amen.

THE

APPENDIX,

IN

A Short Paraphrase on the four first Verses of the First Chapters of *Solomon's SONGS*, and Part of the 5th & 6th Verses.

Ver. 1. *The SONG of SONGS, which is Solomon's.*

Here's nothing more clear and evident, than for the Church to have their Love-Songs, or Divine and Spiritual Songs, in the Times of the Law, under that dark and gloomy Dispensation; and altho' they had all the Views and Discoveries of

the *Messiah*, Jesus to come, by Types, Shadows, and Figures; yet this Song is most heavenly, as if it had been sung by the Church, in the most flourishing and glorious Times of the Gospel: What Song was ever pen'd in holy Writ like this? When was there so many Discoveries of the Flowings of Grace, that heavenly Love, sweet Communion, and Fellowship that free Converse and Conference that's between the espoused Lord Christ, the Head, Bridegroom and Husband of his Church, and the Spouse, the Bride or Lamb's Wife. It may well, therefore, be called *The Song of Songs*, and that for several Reasons.

First, Because it's far above, and contrary to the filthy Songs of a profane, debauch'd, and brutish World; their Songs must be suited to gratify their Lusts, and please their sensual Minds, as they are under the Power of brutish and fleshly Lusts; but this Song is quite of another Nature.

Secondly, As it's contrary to the Songs of a debauched World, so it's far above the Reach, and beyond the Spring of any Light, Life, or Love, that's found in the worldly Church, or earthly *Jerusalem*: By earthly *Jerusalem*, I mean, such who are brought out of their Heathenish, and Idolatrous State, into Conformity to the Law of God, as on Mount *Sinai*, and so are under a Covenant of Works, being the fleshly Seed of *Abraham*. By the Word *Flesh*, in scripture, is sometimes meant, the Works of the Law, or, the Covenant of Works; *But the Children of the Promise are counted for the Seed*; as the Apostle tells us in *Romans*: But yet, this worldly Church have their Songs of Praise to Almighty God; tho' their Songs are more outward, and visible, not inward and spiritual: Their Songs are more of good Works than Free Grace; their Songs are from a selfish Power of Free Will, wanting the Spring of Divine Love and Free Grace. But,

Thirdly, This Song may be call'd *The Song of Songs*, from the Beauty, or Divinity of its Nature.

song of the Heav'nly Marriage, that is between the Spouse, and her espoused Lord : As the Marriage between the Lord Christ, and his Church is spiritual, so this Song is spiritual. Again, 'Tis a Love Song; 'tis all made up of Love: All the Church's Love runs out freely after her espoused Husband. Again, 'Tis a Song, wherein the Substance of all other Graces shines forth : There's a mighty shining Work of Faith in this Song, there is Pardon, Peace, Love, Joy, and Delight, that they have in each other : There is a sweet Complacency and heav'nly Concord between each other in this Song. Again,

Fourthly, It may well be call'd *The Song of Songs*, from the super-abounding Degrees of it ; in that 'tis a Song of the greatest Glory, that a human Soul is capable of, on this side of the highest Heav'ns. 'Tis a Song of that Communion, that follows immediately upon the Marriage Union, between the Lord Christ, and his Spouse the Church ; which Communion is the Entrance into the Paradise of God, an Emblem of the upper Glory, the first Fruits of the heav'nly Canaan. Again, 'Tis a Song, wherein they are anxiously seeking, which should commend, or shew forth the Vertues, Graces, or Excellencies of each other most, tho' the Husband far outdoes the Spouse, for as much as he is infinite. But to return, the Husband crys, *Behold thou art fair, my Love, behold thou art fair ; thou hast Doves Eyes : The Spouse makes Answer, Behold thou art fair, my Beloved, pleasant : Also Our Bed is green. The Church crys, My Beloved is white and ruddy ; the chiefest among a Thousand, His Mouth is most sweet, he is altogether lovely : Or, all Love. The Husband crys, Thou hast bewitch'd my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse, with one of thine Eyes ; with one Chain of thy Neck. Now the Spouse might well make Answer, and say, ' O my espoused Lord and Husband, Why dost thou thus commend my Beauty ? And why art thou thus taken with my Bracelets, or Jewels ; and this my Chain ?*

' Are

' Are not all these thine own? Are not these my
 ' Bracelets, Jewels, and this golden Chain of Gold
 ' pel Truth about my Heart thine own? Is not
 ' this my Beauty and Comeliness, that which thou
 ' hast put upon me? To which we may answer
 The Lord is well-pleas'd with the Work of his own
 Grace; he's more delighted with the beautiful Graces
 of the Spirit of Life, than with all the Greatness
 and Glory of this evil World; and that because
 these Graces bear the very Image, or Likeness of
 their espoused Lord. There's nothing in this lower
 World, does so shadow forth the glorious Nature of
 Christ, as the Grace of the New Covenant does.
 Again, If the Lord did rejoyce in the Creation of
 the first World, as it is said; *At the Close, or Evening*
of the Day, the Lord looked upon the Works that he had
made; and behold it was very good. And in the Psalms
The Lord shall rejoyce in his Works. Now if the Lord
 be thus pleas'd with the Works of the first Creation
 how much more with the second? If he's well-pleas'd
 with those Works, that at last, shall be consum'd
 by Fire; how much more with that, which is
a Well of Water springing up to Everlasting Life? But
 to go on, Some may object and say, Why is this
 Song stiled above others? Had not Moses, Miriam,
 Deborah, Barak, David, and other Old Testament
 Saints, Men of God, famous in their Day, Men of
 great Renown, their Songs of Praise; and why is
 this of Solomon's call'd the Song of Songs? What
 I have said already, I think, is sufficient to answer
 but to make it more evident, The Songs of those
 holy Saints of God, did immediately follow upon
 their Deliverance, and Salvation from their power-
 ful and deadly Enemies; when the Powers of the
 World, when persecuting, bloody-spirited Men of
 the Serpent's Seed did pursue the Church, and said
 ' We will overtake, we will divide the Spoil, our
 ' Lusts shall be satisfy'd; then was God's Time
 to cut them off, they sunk as Lead in the mighty
 Water.

Waters; so in after Ages, when no less would serve, to raise it, even to the Foundation, to cut off the name of *Israel*, from being a Nation; then in the Mount our Lord is seen, and he frustrates all their designs, and tramples them under Feet. On which account, all the Churches of the Saints have had their Songs of Praise, for the Wonders of God's Salvation in the Overthrow, and Destruction of their powerful Enemies; but this *Song of Songs* is wholly in this Marriage Union and Communion, between the Lord Christ and his Spouse, the Church; not that in all the other Songs of Salvation, they had feeling Sense of the great Mercy and Love of God, to their Salvation and Redemption wrought out by Jesus; but yet, I say again, that this Song is chiefly of Communion. 'Tis a Song of the spiritual Birth, the second Creation, the New-Creature Life wrought in the Soul, in which there follows, all that sweet conference, Correspondence and intimate Freeness in this Marriage State. But some may say, Was there ever such a thing on this Earth? or is it possible, for the Lord of Glory to marry himself to a mortal Worm, to a vile and wretched Sinner, one of the worst Part of the Creation under the whole Heavens? To this I answer, yes; that tho' we have made our selves so vile, yet he owns himself a Husband, even to a People, that had broken Covenant with him. By which Covenant, we are to understand the first Covenant, made at Mount Sinai, when he brought them out of the Bondage of Egypt, which *Covenant they brake*, says he, *tho' I was an Husband to them*, Jer. 31. 32. Again, *Return unto me, saith the Lord, for I am marry'd unto you*. And in Isa. 54. 5. *thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name*. Is this be so, how, or when is it, that this Marriage was made up and compleated? I will not stay long, in looking back into Eternity; but this I affirm for truth, that that God, who is *Wisdom it self*, did from Eternity, in the secret Counsels of his Grace, choose

a People for himself, and take a People for his Name, whom he would bring in Jesus Christ, into a Marriage Covenant and Relation with himself, at all Times, and in all Ages of the World; but now as the actual Compleating of it, 'tis in the time immediately on Effectual Calling: Effectual Calling, therefore, precedes and goes before; there must be a Call of Grace: The Voice of Christ must reach the dead Soul, and bring it over to himself, from Death to Life, before this Marriage is compleated. This is clear from *Isa. 58. Hear, and your Soul shall live*. Which Words import a spiritual, or Gospel Call, for a Call from a Legal, or Letter Ministry, I think can never reach a dead Heart, and bring it to Life. It must, therefore, be a Call of the Grace of Christ in the Ministry, and Word of his Gospel, by the Power of his Spirit, that reaches the dead Soul, and brings it to Life. Again, These Words, *Hear, and your Soul shall live*, fully import, that we are spiritually dead; as if he should say, You are dead, but if you hear you shall live; but if you do not hear you shall remain dead, as you are now: This Word *Hearing* further imports, our Believing and Receiving Jesus; and therefore, he tells the Jews, *If ye believe not, that I am he; ye shall dye in your Sins for ever*. And what follows, *Hear, and you shall live*, and in the next Words says, *And I will make an Everlasting Covenant with you; even the sure Mercies of David; or the Holy Things of Jesus*. Why is it call'd an *Everlasting Covenant*? I answer, Because all the Blessings and Mercies of it are everlasting. Pardon of Sin, everlasting, Peace, Joy, Justification, Union, Communion and Fellowship with Jesus; all these are everlasting Blessings of the New Covenant, which flow into the Soul on Effectual Calling. From hence 'tis evident, That this spiritual Marriage, and Covenant Relation follow on Effectual Calling; and also that this spiritual Song, or *Song of Songs*, is altogether an Harmony in that sweet Converse, Communion

union and Fellowship, between the Lord Christ, and his Spouse, the Church, in their Marriage State and Covenant Relation. But to proceed,
Ver. 2. Let him kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth; for thy Love is better than Wine.
 begin with these Words, *Let him kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth.* Who is this, that the Spouse desires to be kiss'd by? I answer, 'tis no other than her own Husband: *As if she should say, Let him, my beloved Lord, my Bridegroom and Husband, kiss me. Let my Jesus kiss me. Let my Lord, and only Saviour kiss me. Let him, who is my Comfort, my Peace and Life, kiss me. Let him, who alone is precious to me, whom my Soul seeketh, let him, whom I only esteem, and highly value; let him, whom I desire to adore and wonder at, let him, kiss me. Again, Let him, who is my Safe-guard, my Fort, my Wivert, Shelter and Refuge, let him kiss me. Again, let him, who is my Righteousness, my All; under whose Shadow I would dwell for ever, let him kiss me.* What are we to understand by these Words, *Let him kiss me?* I answer, If we should take all Words of Scripture in their Letter Sence, we might fill the world with abominable Absurdities, and ridiculous fancies. We are not, therefore, to understand it literally, or bodily, as of humane, rational Creatures; but spiritually: As *Psalm 2. latter End, Kiss the Son, lest he be angry; and ye perish in the way.* Will ye be so foolish, as to think, that any humane Creature can go thro' the Clouds to meet Jesus; or that glorify'd Jesus should come in Person, and meet any humane, sinful Creature on this Earth? 'Twould be Blasphemy so to think; for 'tis not possible, nor consistent with his Personal Glory, whom the Heavens must receive, 'till the Restitution of all Things.
 But to return, when we read, *Kiss the Son,* the meaning is, submit your selves to him, obey him, be humble before him, get your selves under his sovereign Government, subject your Souls to his Laws,
 all

all which is meant of Heart, or Soul-Kisses; so he
Let him kiss me, we are to understand Soul-Kisses,
 those invisible sweet Embraces between the Lord
 Christ, and his Spouse the Church; they are hea-
 venly and spiritual Kisses, such as worldly Spirits
 know nothing of, therefore, many times, they scorn
 and flout at; but *Wisdom is justifi'd of all her Children*.
 Further, *Let him kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth*
 that is, Let him come near to my Heart, and my
 Heart come near to him: Lovers in their Salutes
 come near to each other; so here, let him come near
 to me, that I may ever be near unto thee, Psalm 148.
 The Church is said, to be a People near to him; so he
Let me come near unto thee, let me dwell in thee, and
thou dwell in me. Thus the Apostle prays for the Church
 that Christ may dwell in their Hearts by Faith; even so,
 him dwell in my Heart continually for ever; let the
 seducing Spirit, lead away my Soul from thee; let
 no Guilt remain unpardoned upon me, but abide
 with me. And this he hath promised in John, *that*
that loves me, will keep my Words; and my Father will love
him; and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with
him. Which Promise was the most ravishing, sweet
 and refreshing, above any I ever met with, in my
 whole Life; 'twas in my first Beginning, in the Word
 of Christ, about forty Years ago. Again, Let him
 me, let him embrace me in his Bosom. Thus it is
 with true Lovers in their Salutes, they embrace each
 other, and lye in each other's Bosom; so here, let me
 be taken into thy Bosom-Love; and thus he has pro-
 mised, to carry them in his Bosom. Again, Let me
 have the Embraces of thy Love upon my Heart, she
 says she, *I found his left Hand under my Head, and his*
right Hand doth embrace me. Again, Let me ever
 upon thy Heart for good: Set me as a Seal upon
 Heart, and as a Seal upon thy Arm. These Words have
 Reference to Aaron, the great High-Priest, and most
 lively Type of the Intercession of our Lord Jesus,
 that, when his rich and beautiful Garments were

him, he must have on his Breast-Plate of Judgment, the Names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel engraven in Stones; as also on the Shoulder of his Ephod, that is always in his Sight, and before him, which he was to carry into the *Holy of Holies*, there to bear the Names of the Tribes of Israel, as a Memorial continually before the Presence of the Lord, making Intercession for them: Thus our Jesus, the Anti-Type, is entered within the Vail into the *Holy of Holies*, with the Names of the Israel of God, and bears them on his Heart continually, as a Memorial in the Presence of his Father: *Well may the Church, therefore, pray, Oh let him kiss me, with the Kisses of his Love, let me ever be upon his Heart for good. Let me be as a Seal upon thy Heart, and as a Seal upon thy Arm. Again, Let him kiss me, let him reveal himself to me, let him discover himself to my Soul. True Lovers in their Embraces will discover all their Thoughts, the very Secret of their Souls to each other; so here, let him discover his Person, Love, Pardon, Peace, Promises and Grace to my Soul, and I will discover all the secret Workings of my Heart to him, Thus he first reveals himself to us, before we discover our selves to him: for The Secret of the Heart are with those that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant. Again, Let him kiss me, let him be familiar with me. Let me have more Freedom, and be more intimately acquainted with him. True Lovers in their Love have more Freedom and Familiarity with each other. So here, Oh my Lord, be more familiar with me, have thou greater Recourse unto me, and let me have a more free Recourse to thee. Again, Let him kiss me, let him manifest himself to me, let the Vail be taken away, and let the Shadows vanish, that I may have more clear Apprehensions of thee; that thy Love may be more manifest to me; Oh my Lord, let all thy Kisses be those Tokens of thy Love to my Soul.*

I proceed unto the next Words, --- For thy Love is better than Wine.

From

From these Words we may infer, that altho' the Creature, *Wine*, is brought into the Ballance with Christ's Love, yet in the Sequel ther's no Comparison between 'em; and that, because *Wine* can only do good to the Body; and sometimes not that. But *Thy Love is better than Wine*; 'tis good, and does good to the Soul, at all Times, therefore, the Spouse may well say, *How much better is thy Love than Wine, than the Smell of Ointments than sweet Spices.* But, as *Wine* is one of God's good Creatures, so it is one of the most comforting, refreshing or reviving Creatures to a sinking, feeble and fainting Heart; therefore the Wise Man saith, *Give wine to them, that are ready to faint*; or, to them that are of a heavy Heart. But altho' this *Wine* has some Vertue in it for the Body, yet it has nothing for the immortal Soul. *Wine* can do no good to any Part, Faculty or Power of the Soul; but Christ's Love works Goodness in every Faculty and Power of the Soul. *Wine* cannot put any good Thoughts into the Heart, rather evil; but Christ's Love moves the Heart to good Things only, and not to evil. Again, *Wine* many Times puts forward the Heart to Drunkenness, Cursing, Whoredom, Lying, Debauchery, and wicked Songs; but Christ's Love puts the Heart on Repentance, Prayer, Faith, Love, holy and heavenly Desires after himself; it brings the Soul to seek after the good things of his Kingdom, and counts this World as Dross and Dung. In a Word, much *Wine* in the Brain, fills the Mind with fleshy and lustful Thoughts; but Christ's Love fills the Mind with Divine and Spiritual Thoughts. Well, therefore, may the Church say, 'Let him kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth, for thy Love is better than Wine'.

From hence observe, that Christ's infused Love are Christ's Kisses: Or thus, the Tokens of Christ's Love, are as the Kisses of his Lips: When Christ infuses or manifests the Glory of his Grace in the Heart of his Spouse, it is as the Kisses of his Lips.

Again

Again, We may further observe, that Christ's Love far excels the best Wine, that ever was in the World. 'Is Wine sweet to the natural Senses? how much sweeter, O my Lord, is thy Love to my Soul? When the Church says, *His Mouth is most sweet*; the meaning is, His Love is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely. Again, Does Wine refresh the weak, feeble and fainting Body? 'but how much more, O my Lord, does thy Love refresh my weak and fainting Soul? Again, His Love is better than Wine, because Wine, sometimes, loses its Strength and Verge, grows flat and dead; but Christ's Love never yes, 'tis the same yesterday, this day and for ever. His Love never fails, he's ever shedding forth his Love on his Spouse by the Holy Ghost, which he has giv'n her. Again, His Love is better than Wine, because it may be far off, and can't be got for Love or Money: 'Tis not every Place and Country, that affords Wine; but Christ's Love is always near, that never departs, or goes far off, but 'tis ever present with his Spouse; for he will not forsake the Soul that seeks him. Again, Wine is costly; every poor Body not able to purchase it, yea, if they were to famish without it; but Christ's Love is giv'n forth without Money, and without Price, for 'tis full, free and everlasting. Again, His Love is better than Wine, most precious, and far above every thing else; because 'tis ever suited to, and giv'n forth in ev'ry part of the Spouse's Life; but wilful Enemies of this Love, have no Share in it: Now let the Church, or any Part of it, be never so much under the Power and Oppression of a persecuting Enemy, this infused Love bears up the Soul from sinking under it. Again, When Troubles and Afflictions are like the Waves of the Sea, one upon another, when Crosses, Losses, Disappointments encrease, yet this infused Love, in shining in upon the Soul, bears up the Mind, supports and comforts the Soul under all. This made the Psalmist cry, *In the Multitude of my Thoughts,*

of my troubled, distracted, or afflicted Thoughts, *Comforts delight my Soul.* Again, When Conscience torments for Sin, when the Guilt of Sin cries for Vengeance, then bring Wine or Musick, as *Darius* to *Saul*, all signify nothing; but the Beamings forth of this Love on the Heart, stops the Cry of Conscience, quenches the Fire of Wrath, brings sweet Peace, Comfort and Serenity of Mind. Again, When Sickness and Violent Feavors come, then bring the best Wine; 'Alas! take it away, it will not refresh me; but thy Love, O my Lord, may the Spirit say, refreshes my Soul. Again, lastly, When dying Pains begin to seize the Body, when the Cheek wax pale, the Eyes begin to sink in the Head, when the Lips quiver, when the Breath grows short, and the Heart-Strings begin to break asunder; then bring all the best Wine, 'tis no better than Pudding or Water to the Soul; then how precious is Christ's Love, that flows forth on the Soul, many times even in the Pangs of Death, in that it fills the Heart with Love, Peace, Joy and Comfort. Again, How powerful is that Love, that secures the Soul from infernal Spirits, even *Lucifer*, and his hellish Crew, that vain would catch the Soul, as soon as it takes its Flight out of the Body; but this Love of Jesus guards it in the Hands of Angels, which convey it safe into the Bosom and Presence of its Lord, there to be for ever; even for ever: How astonishing is this Love! what is all the Wine in the World to it? how incomparable is this Love? there's nothing equal with it. If we should put in the Balance, not only Wine, but all Creature-Beings in Heaven and Earth in one End, and Christ's Love in the other, Love would overbalance all. Well might the Apostle call it, *Love that passes Knowledge.* This Love of Christ is that, which fills the Heavens with Glory, the Earth with Mercy, and the Church with spiritual good Things. O! therefore, *Let him kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth; for thy Love is better than Wine.*

Ver. 3. *Because of the Savour of thy good Ointment, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth; therefore, do the Virgins love thee.*

I begin with these Words, *Because of the Savour of good Ointment*; I have thought, sometimes, that these four Verses, are as a Chain of Gospel Graces; those in *Rom. 8. latter end*, is look'd on as a golden Chain of Gospel Doctrines. In this golden Chain of Grace, ev'ry Sentence binds on one another, the Connection between 'em is inseparable. In the Words before 'tis said, *Thy Love is better than Wine*; and these Words, *Because of the Savour of thy good Ointment*, are 'n as the Reason of the former; as if one should ask Spouse this Question, Why is his Love better than Wine? Or how will you prove it, or make your Words good? or wherein is his Love better than Wine? He answers, *Because of the Savour of his good Ointment*; if she should say, Where this Love is, 'tis better than Wine to any Heart; 'tis as the Savour of good Ointment. From hence observe, that Christ's Love has heav'nly, sweet and precious Savour; 'tis as the Savour of good Ointment. But what does it favour? I answer, It favours of the Grace and Mercy of God; it favours of Pardon, Peace, Love, and all other good things exhibited, and giv'n forth to a lost World, a lost Church and People; which could by no other Way or Means, be recover'd; but by the Savour of Christ's Love, which is as the Savour of good Ointment. Now this heav'nly Savour of Christ's Ointment, is best known by the Rule of Contraries; and that is, as Christ's Love has a sweet heav'nly Savour, so all and every Sin is quite the contrary; by the several Names given to it in Scripture: As sometimes 'tis call'd *Loathsom*; sometimes *Loathsome Thing*; other times *Filthiness* and *Scum*. Again, it's call'd *an evil and bitter thing*; elsewhere 'tis call'd, *Savour*; *Thy Stink shall come up, and thy ill Savour*; where *abominable*; from these and many other Words, we may learn, that as the Almighty God of

Heav'n and Earth, is a pure, holy and righteous God yea, *glorious in Holiness*; it must needs follow, therefore, that Sin is most contrary to this holy God, and is most loathsome, filthy and odious in his sight; and he is, therefore, said to be *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*. Then if Sin be so loathsome and filthy, there must be something done, that must take away the loathsome Sin, and its ill Savour; but there was never any found in Heav'n or Earth, or done in either, that could take away the dreadful Guilt, and loathsome Filth of Sin, but a Jesus by his bloody Death. It is, therefore, Christ's Love in his Death, that is the Savour of good Ointment; Christ's Love was never greater, than in that Day he was on the Cross: Here is Love with the greatest Witness, here's Love sealed with his Blood, here's Love to wonder at for ever we may well cry out with the Spouse, *Thy Love is better than Wine, because of the Savour of thy good Ointment*. 'Tis this Ointment of Christ's bloody Sacrifice that is the sweet Savour that God accepts of, as *Eph. 5. 2*. He offer'd up himself as a Sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling Savour. And whoever comes to God in Prayer, and does not come in the Faith of this Blessed Sacrifice, they have no Savour of the Things of God upon them. If we observe our Discourse our Lord had with his Disciples, we find him often inculcating this to them, that he must go to Jerusalem, and be rejected of the Elders and Chief Priests, and be crucify'd and slain. But Peter, not having received the Spirit as yet, begins to rebuke him; Lord, *Thou shalt not suffer this thing to befall thee, for as much as thou art Holy, and thyself knowest all things, this shall never come unto thee*. What is the Answer our Lord gives him? no less than this, *Get thee behind me, Satan; thou savour'st not the Things that be of God, but the Things that be of Men*. From hence take Notice, 1st. That they who go about to deny the Death, or the Vertue of the Death of our Lord Jesus, have no savour of God, or of the Things of God upon them. Again, 2^{dly}. They who slight or disdain the Benefits, or Fruits of a

g Jesus, they savour of the Things that be of Men, and not the Things that be of God. 3dly. They who deny the Power of the Blood of Jesus, to pardon and justify Sinners, they have it from Satan and not from God. *Get thee behind me, Satan,* says our Lord; thou savour'st not the things that be of God. 'Tis, therefore, most clear and manifest, that the Death and Sacrifice of Christ alone, is a sweet smelling Savour to God. I can't forget that further Evidence in that blessed Noah, in the beginning of the new World, we find, that as soon as he got his Foot on dry Land, after his being tossed long upon the Waters, above twelve Months; the first thing this good Man does, *He builds an Altar, and takes of every clean Bird, and offers Sacrifice.* From hence observe, That whenever we receive any Salvation from eminent Dangers, the first thing we should do is, to offer up our Praise and Thanks to God for his great Mercy. But what follows upon his Sacrifice, the Word says, *the Lord smelled a sweet Savour.* Was it the Work done by Noah, that had such a sweet savour with God? No; 'twas the Sacrifice of his Christ, the *Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World*; of which Noah's Sacrifice was a type, and Noah, in the Way of believing on Jesus, the Sacrifice to come, is said to be *Heir of the Righteousness of Faith*; upon all which we need not wonder, that the Church crys out, *Thy Love, O my Espoused Lord, is better than Wine, because of the Savour of thy precious Ointment.*

Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth. These Words further exemplify the other, that as the Ointment of Christ is of a precious Savour, so 'tis such, by being poured forth, *Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth*: His Name is not hid, 'tis poured forth. From hence take notice, that the Name of Jesus is of a spreading Nature; his Name has been spread abroad, in all Ages, and the Church, it hath ever been the Substance, and principal Work of the Ministry, both of the Prophets and Apostles, tho' more darkly in their Prophecies; yet

they all prophesy'd and preach'd a Jesus to come; they all had something of the Gospel, tho' more darkly. This Name *Jesus*, was as Ointment pour'd forth, unto their Souls; they had sweet Sights, and blessed Discoveries of the *Messiah*; their Souls, by Faith, were plac'd, and fix'd on him; they had assured Interest in him: Therefore *Job* could say, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*; and as it was their Work, to spread this Name *Jesus*, much more the Apostles. This Name *Jesus*, was only precious, sweet and delightful to their Souls; was their whole Work, to spread his Name, Fame, Grace, Glory, Ointment and Greatness: This Name *Jesus*, was the whole of their Doctrine and Preaching; and therefore, *We*, saith the Apostle, *preach Christ crucify'd, unto the Jews a Stumbling-Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness*. And when they were imprison'd and sharply threaten'd, the Word tells us, *They ceased not, to teach and preach, in the Name of Jesus, and went away joycing, that they were counted worthy to suffer for his Name*. Thus his Name was only precious to them. It is observed of *Paul*, that he had this Name *Jesus*, the Christ above five hundred times in his Epistles; Well, therefore, may the Church cry out, *Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth*. How lovely is thy Name, O lovely Only One? How sweet and comforting is thy Name to me, O Only One? How delightful is thy Name, O precious One? All the Virtues of heavenly Sweetness, all the Glory of heavenly Goodness, O my *Jesus*, comes from thy Name, poured forth as Ointment. It's that on which perfumes the Heart, purges Conscience, refines the Soul, renews the Thoughts, purifies all our Services in Worship; Hearing, Prayers, Praises, Sacraments, are all perfumed and refined by this Name *Jesus*; whose Name is as Ointment poured forth. In these Words, we must understand two things, First, It may refer to the bloody Death he underwent. In *Isaiah 53*. It's said, *He poured out his Soul unto Death*. And also, *Thou shalt make his Soul an Offering*. Secondly, Here it's said, *Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth*.

forth, all which amounts to this, that the very Name^s Soul, and Body of our Lord Jesus, was poured forth into Death, for the Redemption of his Church, *For the Transgression of his People was he stricken.*

Secondly, *Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth*, may refer also, to all those sweet, fragrant Graces of the Holy Ghost; in all that heavenly Light, Love and Joy, which are the blessed Fruits, that are ever flowing forth from the bloody Death of Jesus. From this comes all the sweet Savours of the Grace of Life, in which the Church is accepted, by Virtue of the Sacrifice of his Death; and therefore, when the Lord is speaking to a Church, in their reforming, and turning to him, *will accept them with their sweet Savour*, says he, *in all their Oblations, and in all their Sacrifices which they offer.* There is a sweet Savour of Rest, Joy and Comfort, thro' this Name *Jesus*; whose Name is as Ointment poured forth. From all which we may further note, that wherever this Name *Jesus* is poured forth, there is a sweet, precious and heavenly Savour; but on the other Hand, wherever this Name *Jesus* is not poured forth as Ointment, there's an ill Savour. But what ill Savour is it? I answer, There is the Savour of an unclean and unsanctify'd Heart; there is the filthy Savour of a Fountain of noisom Lusts, Pride and Wickedness in the Heart; there's a Savour of Death, Hell and Devils. The Apostle tells us, to the one, *They are Savour of Death unto Death*; that is, Death spiritual and eternal, in the Absence of God for ever. But wherever this Name *Jesus* is poured forth as Ointment, there's a sweet Savour of all heavenly, spiritual and eternal good things. This Ointment is as the Dew of Hermon, and on the Mountains of *Sion*, where the Lord commanded the Blessing, even Life for ever; there is no Ointment like this in Heaven above, or on the Earth below; 'tis the sweet Savour of this Ointment, that brings Pardon, Peace, Life, Comfort and Joy for ever. We read of *Mary*, who had a dear love to this *Jesus*, having a Box of precious Oint-

ment, she comes to him, and out of Love to him, opens it, and pours it forth on her Lord ; and the Word tells us, *That the House was fill'd with the Odour and sweet Savour of it.* Was this so? Did *Mary's Ointment* fill the House? How wonderfully more does this Ointment of Jesus, fill the Soul with the sweet Savour of God's Grace? Was *Mary's Ointment* of a sweet and fragrant Savour to the Senses of the Body? How much more does this Ointment of Jesus, fill all the spiritual Senses of the Soul. Thus the Apostle prays for the Church, *The Lord fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing.* Again, 'Tis this Name Jesus, as Ointment poured forth; that fills the Church Triumphant, and Church Militant; there's not one Member of the Body of Jesus, but what has this precious Ointment diffus'd into its Soul. Let the Members of Jesus be never so weak, yet they have this Ointment pour'd upon 'em; but as for such, who are the Varlets of the Earth, the Scum of the World, the prophane Scoffers, they have no Share in it, neither do they know what it means, till call'd and sanctify'd; while *Mary's Ointment* was kept close within the Box, it had no Savour; even so, while this Name *Jesus* is hid, this Ointment has no Savour at all; no more than in the most senseless Creature. Again, Wherever this Name *Jesus* is not as Ointment pour'd forth, there's nothing but patching up of old *Adam's* apostate Nature, with filthy Rags of our own good Works, and sewing Fig Leaves to cover our naked Souls; which the Blast of God's Wrath will consume for ever. Again, If the Name of *Jesus* be as Ointment poured forth, we may easily know where to find a true Church or Spouse of *Jesus*. If we go into the purest Forms of Worship and Obedience, the most strict in their Way; yet if the Savour of *Christ's Ointment* is wanting, there is no Spouse of *Jesus*. Again, When we rest on the Law given on Mount *Sinai*, which genders to Bondage and brings a Curse on the least Transgression, we make our Boast of God, as the Jew did; yet We

under Works, and not under Grace. Such, who keep wholly under the Law, know nothing of this Name poured forth as Ointment; or those, that mix the Law of Works and this Name Jesus together, in Matters of Pardon, Life and eternal Glory; they cannot be the Spouse of Jesus. Again, Such, who never made this Name Jesus their only All, and themselves nothing in their Judgment and Practice; this Name Jesus was never as the Saviour of good Ointment to them; and therefore, they can't be the Spouse of Jesus. Again, Where this Name Jesus is as Ointment poured forth, there is a saving Knowledge of him, which begets Faith, Love, and every other Grace; in which they ever exalt him alone, give Glory to, and rejoice in him; this was the Apostles Triumph and Thankfulness, *Thanks be to God, says he, that causeth us to triumph, and makes manifest the Saviour of his Knowledge by us in every Place.* This is a further Evidence of what has been already said, that where this Name Jesus is poured forth as Ointment, there is a sweet Savour of the Knowledge and Grace of God; but where it is not, there is nothing but the loathsome Savour of indwelling Sin. *Now the Spouse might well make this Reply,* But why, O my espoused Lord and Husband? Why is it, that thou hast revealed, or poured forth thy Name as Ointment? Might thou not have reserv'd thy Name within the Bounds of thy own Glory? Can'st thou be greater in Glory? Is there any thing greater than Infiniteness? Is not thy essential Glory the same, that thou had'st with God the Father before all Worlds, from all Eternity? and is it possible, that thou should'st be greater? *To which we may answer,* No, But what then; Was there any Thing of Worth or Worthiness in me? Was there any thing lovely or desirable in me? *I answer,* No; Was there not quite the contrary? Was I not cast out to the loathing of my Person, lying in my Blood, as the most loathsome, or filthy Creature upon Earth, *To which I answer,* Yes; O then stop here, sit down and wonder

wonder a little, and let all the Saints and Angels above and below, wonder with me, and so wonder forever, at that stupendious, transcendent, astonishing Love of God in Christ Jesus; in that he doth reveal himself, make known his Name, and pour it forth as good Ointment; we may well cry out, *How excellent and precious is thy Name in all the Earth?* in that sweet Savour of thy good Ointment. But I go on to the next Words,

Therefore do the Virgins love thee. These Words seem to me, as a Reason given of the Spouse's Love to her Lord; *Because of the Savour of thy good Ointment, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth, therefore do the Virgins love thee.* From these Words we may take Notice, that there are some People in this World, that love our Lord Jesus Christ; But who are they? the Word tells us, *they are Virgins*; 'tis only the Virgins, *the Virgins love thee.* But why are they called Virgins? Among many other Reasons, I will name three; they may be called Virgins, because of their Chastity, Purity and Innocency.

1st. They are called *Virgins*, because of their Chastity: Thus the Apostle tells the Church of Corinth, *I have espoused you as a chaste Virgin unto Christ*, says he; they keep their Marriage Bed undefil'd; The true Spouse of Jesus are those blessed Ones that are *undefiled, that walk in the Law of the Lord.* The Spouse looks to the Law of her Husband, in every part of her Obedience. Wherever the true Spouse is, she is not adulterated with Mixtures in her Worship, the Laws of her Husband are the Path, that the Spouse walks in with her Lord; and therefore, she can appeal to him, that *their Bed is green*; they lodge together in the green Bed of his pure and holy Laws, they live with each other in holy Ordinances, both publick and private. If the Spouse should go into any corrupt, devised Way of Worship, into any Worship of humane Invention, she would be guilty of Whoredom, in defiling her Marriage Bed; but

tis not so with the true Spouse, for she keeps her Chastity.

2dly. They are *Virgins*, because of their Purity: As she loves both inward and outward Purity, so she labours after both; these pure Virgins are such, whom the Wise Man describes, *He who loves Purity of Heart, for the Grace of his Lips the King shall be his Friend. And Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.* These Virgins are neither double-tongued, nor double-hearted, they can say with the Psalmist, *My Heart is inditing a good Matter*; and what the Heart indites, the Tongue can speak. When their Prayers are made up of holy and heav'nly Matter, their Hearts are holy and heav'nly; when their Praises are holy, their Hearts are so. Again, As the Heart believes and acts Faith, so the Tongue will speak. Again, As those Virgins are holy in Duty, so in their Conversations: Their Conversations are honest, just and good, as they are in Christ Jesus; and as the Apostle saith, *Having your Conversation honest among the Gentiles; And let your Conversation be without Covetousness*; and *Be ye holy in all manner of Conversation*; even so are those Virgins holy both in Heart and Life. Again,

3dly. They are *Virgins* by their Innocency: This appears in their taking of Wrongs and Injuries, rather than give them; says our Lord, *I send you forth as Sheep among Wolves; be ye wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves.* And the Apostle exhorts, *that We should be harmless in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation.* Thus those Virgins are such, by their Chastity, Purity and Innocence.

Therefore do the Virgins love thee. Now this Question may be a little enquir'd into, What is it the Spouse beholds, or sees in her Husband, that she thus loves him? This Question is sometimes put to her, *What is thy Beloved, O thou Fairest among Women?* Or, *Who is thy Beloved, that thou dost so charge us?* Those Enquirers, we may suppose, to be

be the Carnal Seed of the Jews, such who knew nothing as yet, of the Grace of God in Truth; such as the Apostle tells us of in Eph. 2. 12. *Who were Enemies and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, who were without God, without Christ, and without Hope in the World, and Aliens to the Common Wealth of Israel*: such who knew nothing of that heav'nly Converse, that sweet Communion and Fellowship, that Inter-course of Love, that pass'd between the espoused Husband, the Lord Christ; and his Spouse, the Church: 'Tis no wonder at all, that they ask, what is thy Beloved? but others seem to be more sensible of that Correspondence between Jesus and his Spouse; and they cry, *Whither is thy Beloved gone that we may seek him with thee*; as if they had some Taste of the Sweetness and refreshing Comfort, that the Spouse had in seeking Jesus. The Spouse makes Answer to the other, *My Beloved is white and ruddy; the Chiefest among Ten thousand*. Upon which, she sets forth the transcendent Glory and Perfection of his Person; and concludes with this, *His Mouth is most sweet; or his Love is most sweet: He is altogether Lovely; or all Love*. Upon which we may conclude,

First, That one Reason of the Church's Love unto her Lord, is from the Greatness, Glory and Dignity of his Person; and this appears from the many Names and Titles given unto him. He is called in the Psalms, *More glorious and excellent than the Mountains of Prey*; He is the *Beauty of Holiness*: *From the Womb of the Morning thou hast the Dew of thy Youth*; importing from the Days of Eternity, thou hast the Dew of thy Youth. Again, He's said to be the *Ruler of the thousands of Judah*; even He, whose Goings forth are of Old; even from everlasting. Again, He is called the *Ancient of Days*; and Michael our Prince: the *Messiah*, the *Messenger of the Covenant*: Now all these respect the Person of our Lord Jesus. But to come to the New Testament, He is call'd both Lord

and Christ; as also the Prince of Life and Lord of Glory; He is called King of Kings and Lord of Lords; elsewhere, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth; as also, the Rose and the Off-spring of Jesse; the Bright and Morning Star; all which is spoken of the Person of our Lord Jesus. Well, therefore, may this Virgin Spouse love her espoused Lord and Husband, when he is so great, wonderful and glorious in his Divine Person.

Secondly, As the Church, this Virgin Spouse, loves her Husband, because of his Person, so also by Virtue of his Office: He is a Mediator by Office, he is the only One, whom God the Father has ordain'd, appointed and set apart, as the only Mediator between him and the whole World: *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Lord Jesus Christ.* But in a more special and peculiar Manner, he is the only Mediator between God the Father and his Church; and therefore, he is said to be the Mediator of the New Covenant, or New Testament; and as Mediator, he is so in a threefold Office, viz. of Prophet, Priest and King; which three Offices the Apostle seems to include in these Words, in 1 Cor. i. latter end. *Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.* By which we are to understand, that there is nothing in the whole World, that is good or necessary for the Church, that is for her Recovery and Salvation; but what is to be found in those Words: It is well for the Church, therefore, that she has such an Husband; and it well becomes the Spouse to be marry'd to such a One, who is made of God, unto her, *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.* Now we will suppose the Church to be without all these, and then, what are they better than the rest of the World? Or, wherein do they differ? Are they not the same most vile and wicked? Are they not as bad as the worst, given to Lust, Covetousness, and all Manner of Wickedness; and this is clear, from the

the Apostle, when he reckons what he himself was with the rest, before Calling; *Wherein in Time past, says he, We walked after the Course of this World; in the Lusts of the Flesh, and were by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others.* And thus it is with all the Churches, until Christ is made Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. And indeed, it is for this Cause, and to this End and Purpose, that our Lord came into the World; in that of *Ephesians*, when speaking of the Church, it's said, *He gave himself for it, that he might wash it, and sanctify it, that he might present it to himself, a glorious Church, without Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without Blemish.* Now as Christ is made thus, for the Sake of his Church, well may the Spouse be in Love with him; and if we seek the World throughout, there is none, that has any Share or Interest, in the fore-mention'd Riches of Jesus; but the only Virgin-Spouse, the Church. 'Tis the Church can only say, we are poor, ignorant, blind, dark-sighted, foolish Creatures, but Jesus is our Wisdom. We are poor, guilty, condemned and cursed Creatures, but Jesus is made our Righteousness. We are filthy and loathsome Creatures, lying in our Blood, but Jesus is our Sanctification. Again, We are Slaves to Satan, under his Power and Government, led captive at his Will; but this Jesus is our Redemption. We cannot, therefore, at all wonder, that the Virgin-Spouse does thus love her espoused Lord; and why, but that because it is he alone, who takes away all her Spots of Guilt and Filth, and cloaths her with his Robe, beautifies her with his Grace, puts upon her the Ornaments of Glory, presents her to himself, and to his Father, in his own beautiful and blessed Garments, that he has cloath'd her with. Well may this Virgin-Spouse be swallow'd up with Love to him; and Oh! that all the Virgin-Churches were thus involv'd into Love with him, and might love more, praise more and admire more, and to hold out,

ut, and hold on, through the Endless Ages of Eternity. But,

Thirdly, The Virgin-Spouse loves her espoused Husband, because of his Visits of Influence, and Communications of Grace : This, I have often thought, to be the turning Point, between the true sincere and the Hypocrite, or between the Wise and Foolish Virgins. The true-born Spouse of Jesus receives him in all his Graces, the Hypocrite only in some of his Gifts ; for he gives Gifts to Hypocrites. The Wise Virgins always receive him in their Visits, by Influences of Grace ; the Foolish by Fits, and are quickly gone another Way. The true Virgins walk with Jesus in his Graces, the Foolish in Gifts only ; and thus the true Virgins love him because of all his Influences, in which they have all their sweet Fellowship and Communion with him.

Fourthly, The Virgins love him, because of the purity of his Laws : *Thy Word is very pure, therefore thy Servant love it.* This is quite opposite to Carnal Nature, but yet Carnal Nature may walk in the Letter of the Law, but true Virgins walk in the Divinity of the Law. They walk in the Spirituality of the Law, as the Law is spiritual, so their souls are spiritual ; as they are moulded in Part into the Holiness of Christ's Nature, therefore, into the Holiness of his Law. They walk in the Life of that Law, *of the Spirit*, which sets them free from the Life and Power of indwelling Sin. All the Laws of Jesus in the Covenant of Promise, or the second Covenant, are spiritual Laws ; there's Faith, Love, Repentance, Holiness, heavenly Joy, Light, Peace and Comfort ; these are all spiritual Laws, and Fruits of those Laws, which flow in upon them. And thus those Virgins love him, because of the Spirituality of his Law ; and such, his Law dwells in them, *his Word dwells in them*, and they love him in it ; which is a true Witness of their being true Virgins espoused to him. But

Fifthly, The Virgins love him, because of the Good-

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ness of his Promises: The Fulness and Riches of his Promises are unsearchable; they have all the good Things of the Kingdom of Jesus in them in this Life and all the Treasure of the Kingdom of Glory here after. There is nothing in the Promises, but what helps forward the Divine Life in the Soul; that *Romans 8.* is general, and reaches to every Part of Believer's Life; *All things shall work together for good, to them that love God; to them that are called according to his Purpose;* Which Calling imports the Divine, or New Creature Life. Now if all the Promises be for the good of the Virgins, and have such Treasure and Riches in them; well may the Spouse love her Husband, *in whom are all the Promises,* and the good of her to the Glory of God.

Sixthly, and Lastly, The Virgin-Spouse loves her Lord, because of his Providences. All God's Promises in the second Covenant are absolute, they are all of sovereign Grace unto us, but unto Jesus conditional; to us absolute, full, free and everlasting. And as such, the Providences of God do ever make good his Promises, not only to outward Things in preserving the Church; but by Grace to the inward: If it were not for God Almighty's Power in his Providence, the Virgin-Spouse of Jesus would soon be cut off. If the Reins of Providence were loose, the Enemy would soon devour and destroy at once, the true Spouse of Jesus. Glory be unto him, that is the Safe-guard of his Church, both by Grace, Promise and Providence. I have often thought to know the Meaning of that Word in *Isaiah* *Thy Walls are continually before me;* the Words before are, *I have engraven thee on the Palms of my Hands,* *Thy Walls are continually,* &c. which seems to be, both Promise and Providence to his Church, that as his Name is engraven on his Hands, so the Walls of his Providence are for her Defence, *I have,* says he, *pointed Salvation for Walls and Bulwarks.* 'Twas the same God, that made the Red Sea a Wall on the right

ght hand, and on the left, for his Church to pass through ; while his Enemies were overthrown. Thus the Virgin loves her espoused Husband, because of the Glory of his Person, his Office, Influence, Laws, Promises and Providences. Thus much for the third Verse.

Ver. 4. *Draw me : we will run after thee.*

The Church having thus far set forth the Grace and Love, the sweet favours of his Ointment ; the virtues and Goodness of his Name as pour'd forth, giving some heav'nly Tastes of his Love, and something of his sweet, refreshing Presence, she immediately goes to Prayer. And we may first take Notice of the Matter of her Prayer, which is this, *Draw me : we will run after thee.* It seems, the Spouse did not want Words of Prayer ; she did not seek to others, to know what to pray, or seek for some good book to pray by ; but she has Prayer within her self. From whence we may observe, that every true Spouse of Jesus has Prayer within her self. As she has a Heart to pray, so she has Words of Prayer ; and as she has Words, so she has an Heart to pray ; and oftentimes more in Heart than Words.

But to return, *Draw me : and we will run after thee.* From which we may further observe, That it is part of the Prayers of the Church, that she may be drawn, so as to run after her espoused Lord and Husband ; or thus, it is the Work of Prayer to seek Jesus, to follow hard, and run after the Lord Jesus Christ : *As if the Spouse should say, Draw me, O my espoused Lord, so I thy Spouse, thy Church, will run : But whither, O thou Spouse of Jesus, wilt thou run ?* She answers, *We will run after thee.* From hence note, That the true Spouse is very sensible of the Want of the Drawings of her Lord, whereby she may run after him : *As if she should say, O my Lord, if thou wilt draw me, I will run : I will come Step by Step, as if I did not care, whether thou come or no ; but I will run after thee.* Again, I

will not come, as if it were to the Gallows, with dull, dead and heavy Heart; but I will run: I will come with might and main, I will come with all my Heart, my whole Heart and Soul will run after thee. *Again*, I will not come in a luke-warm formal, customary, outward Way and Manner; but I will come in the very Heat and Vigor of my Soul. *Again*, Draw me, O my Lord, and I will run after thee, but if thou dost not draw me, I cannot so much as move one Step towards thee. I can run with all Speed, and all my Might, after my Lusts and Fleshly Pleasures, after Creature-Comforts and Delights of this World, after the *Flesh-pots* of Egypt or after a good Bargain of Worldly Goods; but when I come to set one Foot, or one Step towards thee, presently my Heart gives back, and I turn another Way; even thus it is with my Soul without the Drawings of my Jesus. Upon all which Account we may learn this, that the Prayers of the true Spouse are not slight and indifferent Things.

But now let us enquire, What the Spouse means by these Words, *Draw me*? Or what is it, that she desires to be drawn by? Is it always the powerful Preaching of the Word, and Gospel of our Lord Jesus? *Says one*, I heard a very good Sermon to Day. *Says another*, I heard a precious Sermon concerning Jesus Christ, and Salvation by him: But what then? Where is the good Fruit and blessed Effect of it? I answer, therefore, in the Apostles Words, *Heb. 4. 2.* that *the Word did not profit*, neither does it always profit, *not being mix'd with Faith in them that hear it*. But what is it then? Is it Conviction of Sin? the Terror of the Law? the Load of Guilt set home upon Conscience, that draws the Soul to Jesus? I answer, not always: Sometimes Convictions are troubled upon, Terrors of the Lord shaken off, and the Power of Sin assumes the Throne, and keeps up a peaceable Dwelling in the Heart. But, what is it then? Reading good Books, good Sermons, or good Prayers.

prayers, that draw the Soul? I answer, no: Sometimes these leave the Heart as bad as ever. What is it then, that draws the Soul to Jesus? I answer, 'tis no less than the mighty Power, and effectual Working of the indwelling Presence of the Holy Ghost: I say, again, 'tis the Working Power of the Spirit alone, that draws the Soul after Jesus; the Spirit of the Lord bends the Mind, bows the Will, and draws the Affections to seek a Jesus. What made the Psalmist cry out, *My Soul follows hard after thee, O God; thou art my God, early will I seek thee. Again, I will go unto God, my exceeding Joy.* Elsewhere *My Heart, and my Flesh cry out for the Living God, when shall I come and appear before God.* Now all this was from the indwelling Power and Presence of the Holy Ghost in the Heart. Again, What made the Prophet Isaiah cry out, *With my Soul have I desir'd thee in the Night, with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early.* And the Apostle Paul, *I press forward, says on, toward the Mark of the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. And I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* All this was from the Movings and Breathings of the Holy Ghost in the Heart. We may find by tracing the Scriptures, from whence this Drawing-Work comes. Sometimes, 'Tis attributed unto God the Father, *No Man, says our Lord Christ, can come unto me, except the Father draw him.* And sometimes, 'tis attributed unto God the Son, speaking of his being lifted up upon the Cross, *And I, when I am lifted up, will draw all Men after me.* What is the Meaning of this Word *All*? Will he draw the whole World after him, the *Anchritian*, the *Turkish*, *Pagan*, and all the cursed Crew of Varlets and Vermine, debauched Ones, that live and dye so in this World? I answer, The Word of the Lord condemns such, for as they are un sanctify'd they are unsaved: This Word *All*, therefore, is to be taken in a restrained sense, and is best known by such Scriptures as these; *All that the*

ther hath given me, shall come unto me. And in John 17
As thou hast given him Power over all Flesh, that
 should give Eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him
 And again, *Those whom thou hast given me I have kept*
and none of them I have lost, but the Son of Perdition
 which was not as the rest were. This Word
 therefore, respects the whole Body of the Church
 Militant and Triumphant, whom God the Father
 had giv'n into the Hands of Christ; even those that
 he will draw, sanctify and save for ever.

But I proceed to the next Words, *Draw me:* my
 thy Spouse, will run after thee: *the King hath brought*
into his Chambers. But what's the Meaning of the
 Word, *King?* or who is this King, that hath brought
 us into his Chambers? I answer, 'tis the Church's
 Husband; or, 'tis he alone, that is the Husband of
 this Spouse. And here she gives him the Title of
 King, and well she may, for he is *King of Kings,* and
Lord of Lords, the Lord *Jehovah,* the living, true and
 everlasting God, *who is God over all, blessed for ever*
 even he, is the Spouse's King. But to be more par-
 ticular, sometimes God the Father calls him his
 King, as in *Psalms 2. Yet have I set my King upon his*
Hill of Sion; that is, the Church. Again, the Church
 sometimes calls him her King, as in *Isaiah, The Lord*
is our King, and he will save us. Again, sometime he
 calls himself the Church's King, *I am the Lord, your*
holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. But now
 his Spouse has a King over her, who is the Lord
 Jesus Christ; ev'n so, there is another Church, which
 is the worldly, or corrupt, degenerate Church, but
 yet may live under the Letter of the Word, and
 these also have a King over them; but it's the black
 Prince, of the bottomless Gulf, of the lowest Hell,
 and he's called, sometimes, the *Old Serpent,* the *Mur-*
derer, the wicked One, and *Satan, the roaring Lyon,* seeking
 to devour the whole World. He is also called the
 King of this Church, in *Revelations 9. 11. They have*
King over 'em, who hath his Name in the Hebrew,

on, or a bad One, but in the Greek Appolion, that is, a
 destroyer. Now these two are diverse one from the
 other, forasmuch as their Laws and Government are
 diverse; this King of the true-born or Heaven-born
 Spouse of Jesus, his Laws and Government are divine,
 holy, just and good; and favour of heavenly Glory,
 Life, Peace, Joy and Blessedness for ever; but the
 Laws and Government of the other King, that is,
 King of the apostate and worldly Church, his Laws
 are fleshly, sensual, lustful and wicked, and they fa-
 vour of Death, Hell-Torments, and Misery for ever.
 Oh! How happy then, art thou, O Spouse of Jesus,
 that art thus brought from under the Laws, Govern-
 ment, Bondage, and Tyranny of this wicked black
 Prince, of the Pit of Hell. But to go on,
The King hath brought us into his Chambers: What are
 we to understand by these Words, *The King hath*
brought us into his Chambers? By Chambers, we may
 understand all those Places of Worship, in which the
 Lord Christ does meet with, converse much, and com-
 municate of his Love unto his Spouse the Church;
 and these may be called the Presence Chambers of
 the King, in which his Promise is fulfill'd, that *In*
all Places, says he, *where I record my Name, there will I*
come, and bless them. In which take Notice; that the
 most gracious and blessed Presence of Jesus, is in his
 Presence-Chamber with his Church; or thus, that
 there is a more particular and peculiar Presence of
 Jesus with his Spouse, than there is with the rest
 of the World. Now these Chambers in Scripture
 are divers, and are sometime call'd an *House, Temple*
Tabernacle: Sometimes *Gallery:* Elsewhere *Closet.*
 that the Word denotes unto us, not one single
 Chamber only; but Chambers in the Plural Num-
 ber, and therefore, may be discover'd diversly. As,
 1st. Wherever the Church or Assembly of our Lord
 meets, that may be said to be one Chamber; in
 which there is the Glory of Free Grace display'd;
 the Mercy of God, and the Way of Salvation by

Jesus Christ reveal'd, and the Church does readily receive and apply those blessed and happy Tydings of Grace and Salvation by a Redeemer.

2dly. Another Chamber is in more *private Societies* either by a Part of a Church, or by some of several Churches; wherein they meet to offer up Prayers and Praises to the Lord for Mercy.

3dly. Another Chamber may be in *Family Worship* in those daily Prayers and Praises to the Lord. Again,

4thly. Another Chamber is more private or secret which our Lord calls a *Closet*; in which secret Retirement there is much Freedom, sweet Converse and Communion between Jesus and the espoused Soul. Now these are some of the Chambers, in which our Lord dwells, and wherein he doth converse much with his beloved Spouse.

The King has brought us into his Chambers: From these Words we may further take Notice, that when our Soul comes into the Ways of Jesus, or into his Chambers; it is Jesus that brings it thither. Again, We may note this, That 'tis the Work and Way of our Lord Jesus, to bring the Spouse his Church into his Chambers. *The King hath brought us into his Chambers.* It was not their own Heart, nor their own Legs, that carry'd them; but their King that brings them thither. If so be, That they were let alone and left to their own Will, and their own Works, they would not come near his Chambers; but go some other Way. Nay, It may be, they might come near to his Chambers, or go to them; but with Intent to persecute and imprison this Spouse, and pull down those Chambers; and all this is, because their Heart, Mind, Will and Desires, are bent another Way.

But to proceed, *The King hath brought us into his Chambers;* we will rejoyce, and be glad in thee: From these Words we may suggest, as if one should say, *Has the King brought thee into his Chambers, what wilt thou do there, O thou Spouse of Jesus?* The An-

yet is, *We will rejoice, and be glad in thee.* From
 hence we may note this, That 'tis the Property and
 practice of the true Spouse, to rejoyce in her Hus-
 band, her Espoused Lord, her Head, and the Bride-
 room of her Soul : This, I say again, becomes prac-
 tical ; it becomes natural, or a second Nature, for
 the Spouse to rejoyce in her Husband. 'Tis not in
 a flashy Heat, or a transient Floating of Affection,
 like a Flash of Lightning, and is gone ; or, like *Herod*,
 who heard John Baptist gladly, and a while after took
 off his Head. Again, 'Tis not only in a good Hu-
 mour, or in a good Mood, or Fit of Passion, like a
 Flood, that overflows the Banks, and anon is
 gone, and seen no more ; but this Rejoycing in Jesus
 comes from the Habit of Life into practical Exercise
 of Life, and this fulfills the Prophecy, which says, *In*
thy Name shall they rejoice all the Day, that is, in the
 Name of the Lord Jesus shall they rejoyce all the Day,
 and *in thy Righteousness shall they be exalted.* Again, It
 answers the Precept, which says, *Rejoyce in the Lord*
always, and again I say, rejoyce. Again, This was the
 practice of the Church in the Apostle's Time, says
 he, *We are they, who worship God in the Spirit, and re-*
joice in Christ Jesus. Again, *We rejoyce in hope of the*
glory of God. And *We joy in God, thro' our Lord Jesus*
Christ. Again, This fulfills the Promise, which says,
Thou meetest him that rejoyceth those that remember thee
in thy Ways. In which we may observe, that this Pro-
 mise is peculiar unto those, that rejoyce in him. The
 promise of his Presence is with those that rejoyce, and
 remember him in his Ways ; *Thou meetest him that re-*
joyceth. Thou meetest him ; but what dost thou meet
 him for ? Surely, 'tis not for nothing he does meet
 them : It must be, therefore, to bless them, to do
 them good, to rejoyce over them. As they do re-
 joice in him, so he does rejoyce in them ; and this
 makes good his Covenant Promise to them, in *Ezek.*
33. I will rejoyce over them, says he, *to do them good,*
with my whole Heart, and with my whole Soul. Again

in *Zephaniah 3.* *He will rejoyce over them with Singing he will rest his Love.* From all which 'tis evident That the Spouse does not only rejoyce in her espoused Lord, but he does rejoyce in her : As there is a mutual Agreement between them, so there is a sweet Harmony in each others Rejoycing. There is a Resemblance in their Joy and heav'nly Melody between them, even thus their Joy and Rejoycing is mutual and harmonious betwixt each other.

But now, upon what Account is it, that the Spouse does rejoyce in her Lord ? Or, what is the Cause and Matter of their Rejoycing ? I answer The Spouse doth rejoyce in her espoused Lord from a deep Sense of that Love and Goodness that is in him ; she is very sensible, that he is Goodness itself, and Love itself ; that all Mercy, Grace and Salvation dwells personally in him ; and that that Goodness and Grace that is in her, she receives from him. Well, therefore, may the Spouse rejoyce, and be glad in him. Again, As she rejoyces in his Love, Grace and Goodness, so she does always rejoyce in his Ways ; as they are spiritual and holy, even so they are to a spiritual Heart and renewed Nature ; *His Ways are Ways of Pleasantness and all his Paths are Peace :* All the Ways of Christ are sweet, pleasant, refreshing and comforting to the Spouse of Jesus ; all this is quite contrary unto the blind and carnal World. As the Church is glad and does rejoyce in Jesus, so the World has its Way of Rejoycing too. Some take up their Comfort and Rejoycing in their Riches and Treasure in the World in their Houses and Lands, in their Gold and Silver Others in their Merriments. Others in Gaming, in Sports and Pleasures. Others in Whoredom and Drunkenness. Others in fine Cloaths, and some in other Things : All which may be reckon'd for what the Prophet speaks of, to a degenerate Church *You rejoyce, says he, in a Thing of nought. You rejoyce in that, which vanisheth like a Dream ;*

that which perisheth, in that which hath no Substance, or Duration, which is gone in the twinkling of an Eye; but the Spouse's Rejoycing is in her espoused Lord Jesus, and will hold on, and hold out for ever; it will be perfected in Glory.

But to proceed in what follows, *We will rejoyce and be glad in thee: we will remember thy Love more than Wine*: The Church does not think it sufficient to speak, or talk of the Love of Christ, and commend it to others; but falls upon the main Work, which is a practical Improvement of it, *We will remember thy Love more than Wine*: She had before spoken of the Goodness and Sweetness of his Love, that it was *better than Wine*, more sweet, precious and delightful; and that because of the *Savour of his good Ointment*: But now she comes to speak the Frame and Temper of her Soul, *We will remember thy Love*; We will think upon it; we will meditate and contemplate thy Love, we will dilate and ruminate our Thoughts upon it. Again, We will have our Thought engaged in thy Love, we'll search into the Depths of thy Love, look into and take Notice of the Ocean and Fulness of it. But alas! here I must stop, and begin to lament, how far, how infinitely short, do's this wretched Heart of mine come, of searching into and improving this Love as I should; but yet every true Spouse has her Thoughts and Contemplations much and often upon this Love; *We will*, says he, *remember thy Love more than wine*; or more than any other Creature, that ever was, is, or shall be. But what Love is it that the Spouse does remember? or is to remember?

I answer, There is no doubt, but that the Spouse has a regard unto the Particulars of her Husband's Love; and does not rest in Generals, as the Formal Professors do; which may, and do, sometimes, in flashy and empty Words, speak of Christ's Love in general; but without any Sense or Application of it. I would, therefore, come to the Evidence and
Ex-

Experience of the Spouse's Love in Particulars, and would fain speak my own Evidence and Experience as a further Witness with the Spouse, And

1st. We will remember thy Love, O my Lord, which thou hadst within thy self before the World was; thy Love that now shines forth on our Souls is no other but a Fruit of thy Love, which was fix'd on thy Spouse, from Eternity, but more of that hereafter.

2^{dly}. We will remember thy Love in the Day when thou took'st our Nature upon thee, when that uncreated and eternal Word *was made Flesh, and dwelt amongst us*. Thus the Church in this Book of Canticles, seems to admire in these Words, *Go forth, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem, or, ye Daughters of Sion; behold King Solomon, or, behold King Jesus, in the Day of his Espousals; or Days of the Gladness of his Heart*. Behold and admire this Love, that brought the Lord of Glory, to dwell in Rags of humane Nature, to be expos'd to Penury. That the Son of Man should *not have where-with to lay his Head*, and yet to count it the Days of the Gladness of his Heart, is a Wonder of Love. That the Son of God should become the Son of Man, that infinite Riches should become poor; here is Love to be admir'd, and wonder'd at for ever. This is some of that Love, that the Spouse does remember, that her Lord should come down from Heaven to Earth, and take our Nature upon him, on Purpose to redeem his Spouse. Lord help us to admire, adore, and wonder at this Love, for ever. Again,

3^{dly}. We will remember thy Love, O my espoused Lord, in the Days of thy suffering for me; when thou wast in the Garden, in that Agony, and sweat, as it were, *Great Drops of Blood falling to the Ground*, and this for my Sins; and when he cry'd, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death*; yet this did not stop the flowings of his Love; neither did the Love stop, when upon the Cross, when his precious Hands and Feet were nail'd to the Cross, his Side

was

as pierced; when he cry'd, *My God, My God, Why
 hast thou forsaken me?* here was Love with more than
 thousand Witnesses; here is Love to be remem-
 ber'd for ever. I have thought, sometimes, there
 was these two Perfections that carry'd our Lord
 thro' his Sufferings, and those are infinite Love and
 infinite Power; as the Power of his God-Head did
 support, and bear him up, even so his infinite Love
 did carry him thorow it; it was Love, that waded
 thorow the Wrath of Almighty God, the Curse of
 the Law, and that ignominious Death. Again,
 4thly. Another Part of Love that the Spouse may
 remember, is, that Love that took Hold of her
 Heart, in the Day, that he called her by his Grace,
 and brought her near to himself, thro' his precious
 Blood, and Help of his Spirit: this the Apostle takes
 Notice of with Admiration, *Behold, says he, What
 Manner of Love is this, that we should be called the Chil-
 dren of God!* Thus the Spouse remembers the Ways
 Times, and Methods of his Love; but when is it
 that the Spouse does remember her Husband's Love?
 answer, She does remember his Love in her Pray-
 ers, Meditation, Reading, Hearing, Conversing, but
 more especially at the Lord's Table; in that Ordina-
 nance there is the most lively Manifestations of his
 Love, and as Wine is one Element at the Table,
 representing the pouring out of his Blood upon the
 Cross; yet the Spouse looks thro' the Element to
 Jesus, and remembers his Love more than Wine.

But to go on, We will remember thy Love more
 than Wine; *the upright love thee*, in the last Words of
 the third Verse he calls them Virgins, *the Virgins love
 thee*; here in the last Words of this fourth Verse he
 calls them upright; *the upright love thee*. These Words
 are a further Amplification, and Confirmation of the
 other; they are so far from any Variation or Dis-
 crepancy in Sense, that there is a Harmony between
 them; the one denotes Chastity and Purity, the o-
 ther Reality and Sincerity. This Word, *upright, there-
 fore,*

fore, is set in direct Opposition to Hypocrisy; as if *they should say*, their Love is real or upright; they love our Lord Jesus really, and uprightly, from the very Bottom of their Hearts. Again, their Love is sincere, there's no Deceit, or Dissimulation in it, it is not hypocritical, flattering, fawning, or counterfeit Love; but is upright, real in the Heart, and manifested in frequent Acts of Life.

But by the Way, Do'n't Hypocrites and Formalists love our Lord Jesus? Yes; but it is but from the Mouth outward. When the Lord is speaking to his Prophet, concerning an hypocritical Church, he tells him, *They will come before him as his People, and hear his Words, and he was to them as a lovely Song, and also with their Mouth they shew much Love, but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness.* It seems they had some Love, but 'twas only from the Mouth. But do'n't Hypocrites go to Church, and say their Prayers, and sit down at the Lord's Table? Yes, but their Heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant. But to return, tho' Hypocrites have an outward seeming Love, yet if we trace the Virgin-Spouse, we shall find, she has upright and sincere Love. But what are we to understand further by this Word, *upright*? I answer, 'tis sometimes in Scripture joyn'd with Perfection; which Perfection is not always to be understood of absolute, but comparatively, and is to be understood of Sincerity, and Uprightness; that is, when our Obedience and Conformity to our Lord Jesus, does answer the Evangelical Law; or the Law of the second Covenant in the Universality of it. This is the Uprightness and Perfection in Part, in which ev'ry Grace and Duty is performed, that the Law of the second Covenant doth require. For as to the Law of the first Covenant given at Mount Sinai, no Man could ever attain the Perfection of Obedience to it: I mean, no meer Man.

But to return, as the Spouse's Love is upright, it's best known by its Obedience; there is universal Obedience

if love, ver- cere, no, rfeir, nani, rma, a the, o his, tell, or hu, with, h. af, love, hypo, d fte, was, n his, e an, gin- cere, this, ture, t al-, ive- ght- nity, law, ver- tion, orm- o re- iven, Per- fan, it's, l O-, ence

edience to all the spiritual Laws of our Lord Jesus; and these are the blessed Ones, *Blessed are the undefiled in the Way, who walk in the Law of the Lord.* This Word, *undefiled*, takes in the whole of Sincerity; but now as there is this spiritual Obedience, there may be a moral, natural, or legal Obedience without the spiritual; but there can be no real spiritual Obedience and Conformity to Jesus, but what always have the natural and legal Obedience with it. This, therefore, may be known to be upright Love, or the Spouse's true Love to her Jesus, by her spiritual Obedience. Again, as the upright Love of the Spouse is spiritual and universal, so there is a Vein of Sincerity, that runs thro' it; there's Faith, Love, and Self-Denial in Sincerity; and this Sincerity of Love to Jesus, cuts down and overthrows all before it; there's nothing able to stand in the Way of this Love, it destroys the Glory of all Flesh, it brings down and subdues Self-Pride, Self-Glory, Self-Righteousness, and the Lord Jesus alone is exalted.

This Word *Sincerity*, therefore, is a full large and comprehensive Word; it may, indeed, be call'd in a more vulgar Manner, a *big-belly'd* Word: But why so? My Reason is, because that this one Word *Sincerity* takes in the whole Mercy, Grace and Blessings of God; that are exhibited, and given forth in the second Covenant; I will give but one Scripture for this, and that is in the Apostle's Words, which are, *Grace be with all them, that love our Lord Jesus*: That is, Let all Blessings, spiritual and eternal, be upon the Heart and Soul of all such, who *love our Lord Jesus in Sincerity*; or thus, let all the good Things of the Everlasting Gospel, be with and dwell in the Heart and Soul of those, that love our Lord Jesus. Again, further, Let all, and every particular Grace of the Spirit, be with all them, that love our Lord Jesus in Sincerity; that is, let the Grace of Faith, the Grace of Repentance, the Grace of Love, Joy, Peace, Experience, Heav'nly-mindedness,

mindfulness, Patience, Meekness, Self-denial; these, and ev'ry other Grace be with them; and reign in all those, that love our Lord Jesus in Sincerity: Thus it is most evident, that Sincerity of a large and copious Extent, including in it these Graces, that the Holy Ghost is the Author and Worker of. And indeed, where this Sincerity is wanting, there may be something like those Graces, that may have some Resemblance of them; but they are all of them no better than a Picture without Life; or a Shadow without Substance: there may be something like the Faith of God's Elect, and something like Love, Peace, Joy, Patience, Meekness, and other Graces; but yet if Sincerity be wanting, they are no better than a dead Carcass, floating upon the Waters.

From hence we are assur'd, that there is none that love our Lord Jesus in Truth, but the upright and sincere Ones: These Words tho' two, yet they are but one in Substance, they are synonymous or equivalent to each other; they agree in one. To be sincere, is to be upright; and to be upright is to be sincere. And as there is none that love our Lord, but upright Ones; so there are none but sincere Ones that love him. Upon this Account the Apostle Paul prays for the Church, that they might be *sincere, and without Offence, until the Day of Christ*. And it is most certain, that none will be found without Offence at the great Day; but only those, who are sincere; and by this one Word, we know who are the true Spouse and Church of Jesus. From this Word, *upright, or sincere*; it is an easy Matter to prove a Church: We need not go to Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, to find a Church. We need not go to Oral Traditions of the Fathers, to pin our Faith upon them. We need not go to fetch our Arguments from Learned, Wise and Prudent Men after the Flesh; but to go to this Word in the Bible, *The Upright love thee*. Here is the true

Spouse

house of Jesus, indeed, here is the only Church;
 at what Love is it, O my Lord Jesus? Or how do's
 thy Church love thee? He tells you in his Word,
Upright love thee; It's the upright, and sincere
 only, that love me; it's them alone that love me;
 their Love is not deceitful, their Love is not Flatter-
 ing, Fawning, or Hypocritical Love; there is no
 deceit, Guile, or Covetousness in their Love; there
 is no Defrauding, Cheating, or Dissimulation in
 their Love; their Love is upright, and 'tis univer-
 sal in its Obedience; 'tis Evangelical or Gospel
 Love. This Love answers those Words in *Psal. 135.*
When shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all
thy Commandments. Again, Their Love is spiritual
 Love; it's called *Love in the Spirit.* It's holy Love;
 it's Soul Love; *I sought him, saith the Church, whom*
my Soul loveth. It's Love in the Heart, or in the
 spirit, not in the Letter; *whose Praise is not of Men,*
but of God. Again, It's Love, that the Sincerity
 of it bears down, and utterly destroys, all that
 comes against it. Again, It conquers Devils, Flesh,
 World and Hell. Again, It tramples under Foot, all
 horrible false Doctrines, wicked, human-invent-
 ed Worship; and all Heresies and Delusions, that
 are broach'd and set forward by the black Prince
 of the lowest Pit of Hell. Again, It's Love that
 will go to a Prison, into Chains and Fetters, to
 fire and Faggot, when called thereto in any of
 these kinds. *Many Waters cannot quench Love, neither*
can the Floods drown it; no, nor the Fire burn it;
 for Love that is sincere and upright, it will follow
 Jesus whither he goes; even thus do's thy Virgin-
 spouse love thee, O thou my Lord, my Rock, my
 Salvation and Redeemer.

But now I desire to come more near, and close
 to my own Heart; and that is, *1st.* For Tryal;
 and then, *2dly.* For Evidence. *1st.* For Tryal;
 and that shall be by Way of
 soliloquy, in speaking to my self: Thus, 'O thou
 my

' my Heart, my Soul within me; dost thou love
 ' this Jesus? art thou in Love with this sweet
 ' lovely and precious Lord Jesus. *Again*, But dost
 ' thou, O wretched Heart within me, truly love
 ' this Jesus? Is thy Love true Love? Dost thou
 ' really and truly love him? *Again*, But is thy
 ' Love sincere and upright? Is there no Deceit or
 ' Falshood in it? Is it not hypocritical Love? *Again*,
 ' Once more; but dost thou, O my Soul, love
 ' this Jesus only? Dost thou love him above all
 ' Dost thou, my Soul, cleave to him alone? Dost
 ' thou leave all Creatures in Heav'n and Earth
 ' for him? Dost thou, O my Soul, leave the whole
 ' Creation with all its Glory, and follow him alone
 ' having all Creatures under the Feet of thy Will
 ' and Affection. Now if this be so, how dost thou
 ' prove it?" Now let us enquire after, and look
 out for some Witnesses to prove it; here I would
 fain bring my Heart, and try it by these Eviden-
 ces; but having spoken so much already, I must be
 the shorter.

The *first* Evidence I have spoke something to
 but shall expatiate a little more upon it, which
 was, *That wherever this Upright and Sincere Love is*
it's known by its universal Obedience to all the Laws of
Christ. As there is a Forsaking of all Sin in the
 Life and Habit of it, so there is a Walking in all
 known Duties, from a Habit of Life in them. Now
 our Lord himself gives this as the chiefest Evi-
 dence of Love, in *John 14* says he, *He that hath my*
Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loves me
and he that loves me, shall be loved of my Father. This
 is, therefore, the infallible Evidence of Love, as
 our Lord should say, Look into your own Hearts
 and try them; look into your Lives, and see what
 they are. *Again*, Look into the World, see how
 they live. Would you know who loves me? he
 that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them
 as if he should say, That's the Man, or that's the

Woman

Woman that loves me, that keeps my Commandments. Again in *John 15. If ye keep my Commandments, ye shall abide in my Love; even as I have kept my Father's Commandments, and abide in his Love.* Hence take notice, that there's a Promise of Perseverance to universal Obedience.

But some may say, What are those Laws of Jesus? or, what are those Commands, in which this Spouse doth walk in this sincere and upright Love?

I answer, 'Tis in special, the Law of the New Creature Life; 'tis in Substance, the whole Work of New Covenant Grace, wrought in the Heart, according to Promise, which is call'd a Law, *I will write my Law in their Heart*, saith the Lord. 'Tis the Law of Grace, in which 'tis always subject and obedient to all the outward Laws that are entail'd upon it; and the Spouse walks in them, as her Path-way of Life, in which she is free from spiritual Death: *For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ, hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.* Thus indeed, as this Law of Grace lives in Jesus; it is he alone, that frees the Soul from the condemning Power of Guilt; and from the reigning Power of Filth. Here then, is one of the greatest Witnesses of sincere, upright Love, it walks with Jesus, in all his Laws and Commandments. This is the first.

Secondly, Another Evidence of this true, upright Love to Jesus is this; they are often thinking of him, their Thoughts are much exercis'd in thinking upon Jesus, and their Thoughts are not as empty Air, and vanishing like the Wind; but their Thoughts of him have Substance in them: There is much Affection and Desire in them, their Affections are towards him, and their Desires are for, and after him: Thus it was with the Prophet *Isaiah, With my Soul, says he, have I desir'd thee in the Night.* Their Thoughts are turned into Prayers, into Desires, and seeking after Enjoyment of him; their Thoughts are not vain, carefess, or indifferent; but

eager and vehement; sometimes for more of his Presence, and Effusions of Grace from him. You know, if a young Virgin be in Love with her Spouse, if she is link'd to him in her Affections, she will be often thinking of him; and not only so, but her Love is only to him; her Thoughts are not flighty and trivial Thoughts; but ardent and strong. And O how sweet are her Thoughts of him, and how desirable is his Company? she loves all that he gives her, and takes all well that he does for her; she embraces his Person with Love, she receives his Tokens with Delight; and thus it is with the Spouse of Jesus, she thinks on him with Love, Delight and Desire, the Thoughts of him are sweet, and refreshing to her, she loves his Person; his Presence is most desirable to her, she loves to hear often from him and receive Tokens of his Love; she is well pleas'd with all he does for her, and is most delighted with what he gives her. This is another Witness of the Spouse's sincere and upright Love.

Thirdly, Another thing, by which we may learn where sincere Love to Jesus is, that he is highly exalted, and esteemed in that Soul; or thus, that every true Spouse and Church of Jesus Christ, doth habitually and actually, highly value and esteem the Lord Jesus Christ in their Souls. I here call it an Habit and Act, or rather an Act from the Habit from the more constant and frequent Practice of it and to distinguish it from transient and fleeting Thoughts, or from those vanishing Affections to Jesus, that may be found in Hypocrites. There is nothing more certain, than that the greater Part of the World know nothing of the Person, Name, Natures and Offices of Jesus; I mean, not in a right or saving manner; ev'n so, there are many Professors of Jesus, that little esteem, or value Jesus in a practical Conversation. Therefore, to understand and know them, who are the true Spouse of Jesus, may be by the Rule of Contraries; and among many

thers, there are four or five sort of People, that never did, and never can practically esteem, or value our Lord Jesus.

First, Such as are ignorant of him, that never knew any thing of this Lord of Glory, or of his Love, Grace, Promises, Righteousness and Redemption; nor of their own Want and Necessity of him: How can they love and esteem him, that know nothing of him.

Secondly, The covetous, greedy minded, the gripping and contriving to get this World's Riches, and hug them in their Bosoms; these can't embrace Jesus in their Bosoms, nor esteem and value him.

3dly. Those of a worldly and carnal Mind, which the Apostle calls *Death*, such can't esteem Jesus; and why? but because of their worldly, carnal Mind.

Fourthly, Such who can, and do allow themselves in Drunkenness, Cursing, Whoredom and Sabbath-breaking and Prophaneness, these can't esteem or value Jesus; and why, but because they hug their Lusts and Pleasures in their Heart.

Fifthly, They that are pleas'd with, and take up their Rest in their own Self-Righteousness, can't esteem, or value Jesus, because they have Goodness and Righteousness enough of their own.

Lastly, All such, who are giv'n up to false Doctrine, Heresy and strong Delusions; can't esteem or value him, because they have lost their Way unto him; but tis not thus with the Virgin-Spouse, or upright Ones of Jesus; they, and they only, highly esteem and value their Lord: This I say, becomes practical in all the Powers of the Soul; he is highly esteem'd in the practical Judgment, he is highly exalted in the practical Will and Affections; this, indeed, fulfills that Prophecy in *Isa. 52. My Servant shall deal prudently, and be exalted and exalted, and made very high. He shall be exalted; but where shall he be exalted? In the Heart, in the whole Soul, which is his Temple, but who are they that exalt him? 'Tis*

the Spouse, the Church; the Virgins and upright Ones; 'tis they, and they only, that exalt Jesus in their Souls. But to be more particular, he is extolled and exalted in the Prayers of the Church; they have great and high Thoughts of him in their Prayers; and why, but because they know him, and have sweet Converse with him, and some further Manifestations from him in Prayers! Again, he's exalted in their Praises; they have high and exalting Thoughts of him in their Praises, *The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my Salvation be exalted*: says the Psalmist. Again, They exalt him in their Meditations, they exalt his Grace, Love, Mercy and Goodness. Again, He's exalted in the Ministry of his Gospel, he's exalted in the Minister preaching his Word, he's exalted in the Church's Receiving it. Again, he's exalted at his Table, in breaking Bread, in those Displays of Love in his Death, in the Exhibition of all those blessed Fruits that flow therefrom. Again, he's exalted in their Conversations; he's exalted when their Life and Practice are becoming the Gospel, when their Conversation is humble, holy and spiritual. Thus the Spouse of Jesus exalts him, who is exalted far above all Blessing and Praise. Again, the Spouse much esteems and exalts him, because 'tis by his Power and Presence that all her Enemies are overthrown and slain; and if *David's* Name was much set by, for his wise Behaviour, and yet at that time, not so much as an earthly Prince; how much then, is the Name of Jesus to be set by, and highly exalted in his Church forasmuch as he is *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*. By this little that has been said, we may look into our Hearts, and try by these three fore-mentioned Witnesses, whether our Love be sincere and upright or no; and whether it be not the Love of Hypocrites. But is this so, does the Spouse thus love her Lord Jesus, with a sincere, upright and pure Love? We may enquire a little further, and ask the Spouse

this Question, How didst thou come by this Love? or what was the Cause of this, thy Love, to thy Lord, thou Spouse of Jesus? or when did this Love begin? Did this Love begin, when thou wast convinc'd of Sin, and when thou wast troubled for thy Sin, and sorrowful for thy Sin? Was this the Cause of his Love to thee? or of thy Love to him? I answer, No, by no Means. What then? Was it thy praying to him, and seeking after him? Was that the Cause? No. What then? Was it thy going to sit under his blessed Word, and Gospel, and hearing the blessed Tidings of Salvation, by him revealed to thee? No. Was it thy sitting at his Table, and there seeing the most lively Representation of his bloody Death, even the cursed Death of the Cross, and all for thy Redemption? Was this the Cause of thy Love to him? or the Beginning of his Love to thee? No? What then is it, that causeth this Love? or when did this Love begin to his Spouse?

I answer thus, that as there is no Beginning of the Being of God; so there's no Beginning of his Love. God Almighty's Being is Love it self, or thus, that God's essential Property, Nature, Essence and Being is Love; or Love it self. *He that dwells in Love, dwells in God; for God is Love.* It's no less than twice repeated in the first Epistle of John, *for God is Love.* And if so, then note hence, that God's Love to his Church is everlasting Love. Thus it is in Jeremiah, *I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, saith the Lord, and with Compassions will I gather thee.* Which Word *everlasting*, is without Beginning, or Ending; and therefore, 'tis said of God, *From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.* And as such, his Love to his Church is eternal and everlasting, without Beginning or Ending. Can you, therefore, tell me, when Eternity began? then I can tell you, when his Love began to his Church. Can you tell me, when Eternity will end? then I can tell you when his Love will end to his Church; But if there be no Beginning, or End-

ing of Eternity, then there's no Beginning, or End of his Love to his Church. His Love, therefore, is without Limits, Bounds, or Measure to his Church; 'tis everlasting, without Link or Bottom. Those Words of our Lord are more precious than Gold, and have been more sweet, refreshing, and more precious than Gold to me. In *John 13*. Our Lord Jesus knowing that all things were now ready, *having loved his own, which were in the World, he loved them to the End*. From hence observe, 1st. That our Lord Jesus has a People in this World, whom he calls his own; *having loved his*. 2^{dly}. That those People that are his own in this World, are the peculiar People of his Love; *having loved his own*. 3^{dly}. That those People, who are his own, *whom he loves, he loves them to the End*. But what's the Meaning of this Word, *End*? From this we are to know, that our Lord was now just entering upon his Work of Suffering, all things were done, and he was now ready to suffer, *having therefore loved his own, he loved them to the End*; that is, he loved them, even unto Death. He loved them, so as to go on, and thorow his Suffering, unto Death, for them. He lov'd them, ev'n in his Agony, in sweating Drops of Blood, and in his being sorrowful unto Death for them. He loved them when under the heavy Wrath of Almighty God; his Love did not stop, when he had the Guilt of all their Sins upon him, and the Burthen of Wrath on that Guilt upon him; yet here he did not stop, he went on with his Work; yea, he went thorow his Work; he did not linger, or stay, 'till he had fully accomplish'd, compleated, and finish'd the Work of their Redemption upon the Cross. Behold, therefore, and wonder, O thou Spouse of Jesus, at this his Love to thy Soul; there is none that will wonder but thy self, and Angels; love, admire, and praise him; and so hold on throughout all Eternity. Again, *He loved them to the End*, that is, to the End of his Life, here on Earth. But did his Love stop here? No; his Love, as I said,

is everlasting; and therefore, all the blessed Fruits and Graces of Life, are communicable after his Resurrection; or else, why did our Lord tell his Disciples, *I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.* And that he appears in the Presence of God for us, and *ever lives to make Intercession for us;* and that he is able, and will save all that come unto God by him, and that none shall pluck his Sheep out of his Hand, or out of his Father's Hand. These and many other Scriptures, witness the Eternity of his Love.

But I come to the other Part of his Love to his Church, which is this; but what's the Cause of this his Love to his Spouse? or, wherefore did he love her from all Eternity?

I answer, 'tis from no other Cause, than from the good Pleasure of his Will, I say again 'tis only a free Favour, meer Mercy, good Pleasure, and good Will; as is said in *Luke, good Will towards Men,* his Love, therefore, is in himself, and from within himself, 'tis not from any Motive without himself, or from second Causes, or any thing done by any created Being; but wholly in himself. 'Tis said of the Church of Old, in *Deut. He lov'd them, because he lov'd them;* and therefore, he chose their Fathers and them to be a peculiar Treasure to himself above all People. He who is Sovereign, will choose whom he will: *He will have Mercy, on whom he will have Mercy;* Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand. As God's Love, therefore, is the Cause of his Church, so God's Love was the Cause of Christ's Suffering. 'Twas God's Love alone, that sent his Christ into the World to save his Church. Again, 'Tis not the Church's repenting, Pray'rs, hearing, believing, and sitting at the Lord's Table, that is the cause of their Repenting, Faith, and all other Graces. Again, God's Love is to the Church before Calling, even when they were the worst in this lower World; he loves their Persons, but hates their Sins, and will take Vengeance on their Inventions. His

Church before Calling is as bad, or worse, than the worldly Church. This was my Case before Calling. I did any good, I was proud of it; if any evil, I was not much troubl'd for it; when I pray'd and liv'd better than others, surely, thought I, all is well with me. I shall go to Heav'n, and these wicked Wretches will go to Hell. But alas! all this time, I was as bad as the worse, I neither knew my self, nor my Lord Jesus; and thus it would have been for ever, without the Call and powerful Voice of the Grace of Christ, to bring the Soul from Death to Life. Again further, As God's Love is the primary and principal Cause of the Church's Calling, ev'n so it's God's Love that brings the Church into spiritual Union and Communion with himself. He marries 'em to himself in Love, 'tis a Marriage of Love in which his Love dwells in 'em, and theirs in him. *He that dwells in Love, dwells in God; for God is Love.* And the Apostle exhorts the Church to keep themselves in the Love of God. This Marriage Love cements, knits and joyns each to other, it bring them into near Alliance and Oneness, *He that is joyn'd to the Lord is one Spirit* therefore, well may the Church say, *I am my beloved's and his Desire is towards me*, his Desire is towards her and hers to him. Again, It's a Marriage of Complacency and Delight in each other, he delights in the Graces of the Church, and the Church delights in that Fullness of Grace in him. Again, he comes into his Garden to receive the Fruits of his own Graces, and to gather Lillies. But what are those Lillies? I answer, they are no other than his Spouse, the living Members of his Body; in which he smells a sweet savour in the fragrant Graces in those Lillies; but when these Lillies are full ripe, and their allotted time come, he gathers 'em, that is, brings 'em into the upper Presence Chamber of his Glory, with himself; there to sit and sing, love and praise for ever.

Now, as all those Things are really so, as they are the real and sure Word of the Truth of Grace, that God's Love in Christ, is the primary and sole cause of

the Redemption of his Spouse, the Church; that this Love is the only cause of her calling of her marriage Union, and sweet Communion, and of her Safe-guard into Glory; then as there is no room for Flesh to Glory, so we need not wonder at all, why the Church should so admirably cry out, *behold, what manner of love is this?* that we, even we, the worst, even we, the most wretched, filthy and loathsome Creatures in our selves, should be called *thy Children, thy Spouse, thy Church, thy Lot, thy Portion, thy Treasure, and thine Inheritance for ever.* So much for the last part of the fourth Verse, *The upright, the Upright alone, love thee.*

Ver. 5, I would desire to speak a little to, according to my present Light, from these Words, *I am black but comely.* One would think here is a strange alteration and change in the Spouse; not so much in the frame and temper of her Soul, as in the form and matter of her Discourse: She had been speaking much of the sweetness of the Love, Grace and Goodness of her espoused Lord, and also of the Churches Grace and Love to him; whereupon, immediately she flies upon her self with this Reflection; *I am black,* says the Church: What is the meaning of these Words, *I am black?*

I Answer, There are divers Sentiments upon these Words, some of which I shall speak a little to.

First, Persecution is one thing the Church counts her *blackness*; its no new thing. but common in every Eye, to be persecuted in some respect or other; either by Tongue, for there are Scoffers in the last Days; so either by Hands, Acts, Laws, or Prosecutions of Laws; and therefore the Apostle tells us, *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.* And our Lord himself tells us, *the time will come, that when they kill you, they think they do God service.* And also, *they shall hate you, and say all manner of evil of you, and despitefully use you for my names sake.* Thus it pleaseth God in Wisdom and Goodness, to suffer and let out the Rage and Fury of that Enemy that is in the Serpents Seed, against the Church, for trial of her Grace, and

and to discover the Hypocrite. Thus it is with the Stony-Ground-Hearers, who hear the Word, and for a time, with Joy, receive it; but not having root in themselves, when *Tribulation or Persecution* doth arise for the words sake, by and by they are offended; which our Lord compares to the Sun in its scorching heat; whereby that which grows upon stoney Ground, withers for want of Root; but it is not so with the true Spouse, altho' she have *Tribulation ten Days*, yet she is faithful unto Death, and will receive the crown of Life. But now as the Church is or may be under such Persecution, sometimes, as may render her black in her own Account, *I am black*, says she, that is, I am spoiled, and rob'd of my Reward and visible Glory, representing her publick Worship in the Ordinances of her Lord. When the Enemy is let loose, and begins to enter her Sanctuary, when they rouse in the Congregation, when they lift up their Axes and Hammers, break down all her carv'd Works, set up their Ensigns for Signs, destroy all the Synagogues of God in the Land; now at such a time, the Church may well say *I am black*.

But again, others say, That the Spouse is counted black in the account of the prophane World: They see no good in the Spouse, they look upon all her Worship, as an outward, empty and frivolous thing, as that which has neither Life nor Substance in it. They look upon all her Prayers, and all her Preaching as canring and fabulous. They look upon all her Profession as Erronious, and Herritical, fit to be stigmatifed, and cast out, to be rejected and abandoned. This is the practical course of the ignorant, profane World, some of which, I have seen and heard; and so is it also with the worldly Church, or earthly *Jerusalem*, they look upon their own Doctrine, Worship, and Ways, to be more Authentick and Substantial. They look upon preaching up of Jesus, and Salvation by him, as little worth. They call the preaching of Jesus, in the discovery of the Gospel, the good News and blessed Tidings of Grace, Mercy, and Peace with God, thro'

our Lord Jesus Christ, and this continued in daily ; and if it be a whole Day, they call it a Prating ; this had in their Books.

Again, They call the followers of Jesus, in Prayer and Praises, a company of Hipocrites, they look upon them as *Scribes* and *Pharises* in their long Prayers. Thus the Spouse of Jesus is look'd upon as Black, both from the prophane and professing World ; but *Wisdom is justified of her Children, and the day will declare it*, who are the true Spouses and only Followers of the Lamb Jesus, and who are the Followers of their own Inventions,

But to proceed, *I am black but comely* ; that altho' what has been said, as to those Interpretations given, is answerable to the Word, as also to the Faith and Experience of the Church, yet I think there's a further meaning in them, which my Thoughts was chiefly upon, and which I chiefly aim at for Profit and Experience. *I am black but comely* ; the Church looks not only on her blackness of Persecution, or the defaming of her Adversaries, but has also a regard to some blackness in her own Breast or Bosome, *I am black*, that is, I have some blackness in me, I am not all Beauty, or so beautiful, but that I have some blackness. I am not all Light, I have some darkness, I have much imperfection in me, I have something left in me of my old Heart, I have the relicks and remains of old Corruption in me, that when *I would do good, evil is present with me*. I have still this body of Death remaining with me, I am imperfect in my self ; but yet perfect in my Head. Alas I have too much of my own Heart, I have still my own Heart to grapple with, and fight against, while I live on this Earth. Thus the Church and true Spouse takes notice of the frame and temper of her own Soul. From whence Observe, That its no new or strange thing, for the Church to have Reflection upon herself, *I am black*, says she, the Church needs no body in the World to condemn her, she see, condemns, and abhors her self before the Lord, at the Throne of Grace.

Thus

Thus it was in all Ages, *I abhor my self*, saith Job *thought on my Ways, and turned*, saith David. Let us search and try our ways, saith the Prophet. Examine your selves, saith the Apostle; all which testify, that they have Reflections upon themselves. Again further The Church does not only take notice of her blackness; but also of her comeliness: *I am black, but comely*, as if the Church should say, tho' I am black in myself, yet I am comely in my Lord Jesus. From which we may observe, that the Church is not so much taken up with her own Deformity, or blackness, as to forget her Comeliness; nor tak'n up with her Comeliness so as to forget her Blackness. The Church travels in a sight and sense both of her blackness and Beauty. She is sensible both of the Works of Nature and Grace: she has her spiritual Sense exercis'd on things that differ; the Eye of her Soul is open, to discern between Light and Darknes: From which further observe That the Church has an observing and discerning Faculty, whereby to discern the Work of Nature from that of Grace, which others of the World know not. As the Spouse knows her Lord Jesus better than others, so she knows her self better than others. But why so? I Answer, That the World knows Jesus with a speculative, notional, or Head-Knowledge only, or a Knowledge of him after the Flesh, that is, after the Law or Letter of the Word; but the Spouse knows him by Application, Reception and Appropriation of him to her self, as her only Lord of Life, and Hope of Glory. Again, as the World may know themselves in some particular acts of Nature, or in some general Works of it; that is, either some great acts of Sin, or general works of Goodness; but the true Spouse knows well the universality of original Corruption of Nature, the impossibility of getting out of it her self alone, and the necessity of the Help and Grace of Jesus to set her at Liberty.

But I go on, *I am black*, says she; this word *black* refers

fers to some Corruption of Nature that remains in
 er still, not taken away, is evident in *Deuteronomy*, it
 said, *their spot is not the spot of Gods Children*. Where
 ke notice, that even God's Children have some spots
 them, or some black spots upon them, the word
 imports it, but they are not the spots of his Enemies:
 again, in *Jeremiah*, the Lord compares his Church to
 speckled Bird, *my beloved*, says he, *is like a speckled*
Bird, which the Birds round about come to devour. Now you
 know a speckled Bird is partly black, and partly white,
 they are not all white nor all black; thus it is with
 spouse, altho' she has the Sun-Beams of Light and
 Grace shining forth in her sanctified State. What was
 made the most evangelical Prophet complain in
Isaiah, *Wo is me*, says he, *for I am undone, I am a man*
of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean
lips, for I have seen the King the Lord of Hosts: Here
 was some blackness. Again, the Psalmist speaks, *the*
Lord, my God, says he, *will lighten my darkness*. Here
 then was some darkness. Again, *Peter* says, *depart*
from me, I am a sinful man. Oh Lord, Thus I might
 instance in many more of this kind, that bear witness,
 that the Church is not without some blackness or dark-
 ness, she is not all white, or all pure: She has so
 much imperfection in her self, that in the sense of it,
 she is kept low and vile in her own Eyes, all the Days
 that she lives on Earth. But how, or wherein is this
 blackness? or how does it appear? If one may speak
 for all, its too common, and woful Experience finds it.
 Thus holy *Job*, from the relick and remains of pre-
 valent Corruption, cries out, *Oh that it were with me,*
as in times past, when the candle of the Lord did shine upon
my Tabernacle; or shine in upon my Heart. Thus
 sometimes clouds of darkness cover the Soul, so *Jer-*
emiah cries, *thou hast covered me with a Cloud that I can-*
not look up, thou hast made my Chain heavy, also when
 I cry and shout unto him, he shuteth out my Prayers. Thus
 sometimes the working of Corruption causes him to
 hide his Face, and withhold good Things, and shutteth
 out

out our Prayers. Sometimes, again, Unbelief prevails much, which darkens and deadens the Heart, and makes all the promises prostrate. This takes away the life of the Promises, the comfort and sweetness of them. Again, this takes away the comfort and life of Duty: there is much dulness, deadness, and sluggishness in Duty. Again, floods of Corruption, and swarms of roving Thoughts baffle the Heart and turn it aside from its Fountain towards the Cistern, till the springs of Grace appear, and cause them all to vanish again. Sometimes temptations to some evil, or some wicked thing or other, whereby the Soul is tossed about, and sinks sometimes in mighty Waters, and when Temptation and Corruption meet and join together, overthrow, overwhelms and begins to sink it, as *Peter* did upon the Waters, and has need to cry with him, *Lord save me, or I perish*; and with *David*, when my Soul is overwhelmed, *Lord lead me to the Rock that's higher than I*. From all which, the Church may well cry, *I am black*, and as there is those relics and remainders of blackness and darkness. It follows, therefore, that there's no absolute Perfection here, and therefore, it may well be said we know in part, we love in part, we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, the which is in part shall be done away.

But now it may further be replied, what's the difference between the Spouse of Jesus and the World; if the Church be black, what better is she then the World, or worldly Church, if she is black, the World can be but black. I Answer, That there is an absolute difference between the blackness of the Church, and the blackness of the World. I will give but two Scriptures in *Isaiah 60.* it is said, *That darkness shall cover the Earth, and gross darkness the People; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his light shall be seen on thee that is the Church.* Hence then the blackness or darkness of the World is gross darkness, its even a darkness that may almost be felt; a darkness, that has no light in it to any good purpose; its absolute darkness without any

ing Light; but the Church has *Light in all her Dwellings*, her *Light is risen upon her*; even that Light of Life that is operative, living and effectual. The other Scripture is in *Eph. 4. We were in Darkness, but now are Light in the Lord*. It is the same with the other, as one is gross Darkness, the other is Light in the Lord, so not without some Blackness. Thus much for those Words, *I am black, but comely*.

I pass to Ver. 6, *Look not on me, because I am black, because the Sun hath looked on me*. These Words are a full Confirmation of the other, that a substantial Meaning of both Words is Persecution; but this more fully of *Jerusalem*. Look not on my Blackness, look not; don't flout, scoff, and deride me; O ye Despisers, wonder and perish. Don't look on me as forlorn, destitute, or forsaken. I am not left, I have some Comeliness, I am not black with Trouble only; but comely with Grace. Tho' the hot and scorching Sun of Persecution has look'd on me, yet I am not forsaken. My Beauty and Comeliness is not gone from me, I have that which bears me up, and carries me thorow all my Troubles, altho' the hot Sun has scorch'd me, in my outward and visible Glory; of public Ordinances in Worship; yet I am comely; the inward Beauty and Glory of Grace is in me. *The King's Daughter is all glorious within*, and that can't be touch'd or meddled with; it can't be scorch'd, much less burnt, by the burning Heat of the Sun of Persecution. It follows, therefore, that the Church had her times of Blackness by Persecution; even in the times of the Law, when the Church was national, when the twelve Tribes of *Israel* became a Church, by their Imbodying together, in their National Worship and Government, according to all the Laws and Institutions of their Lord and Law-giver; and no sooner did they become a Church, and set up the Worship of God; but the Heathen, Idolatrous Nations were designing their Ruine and Destruction. As first by the *Egyptians*, then the *Amalekites*, and then other Nations after them; 'twas but few Ages that escap'd Trouble and Persecution; so that she might well say, *Look not upon me, because I am black; the Sun of Persecution hath looked upon me*. And as it was in those times under the Dispensation of the Law, so now under the Gospel, the Church is often black with Persecution; and as it was then molested with Pagan Idolaters, so now by *Rome Papal*; as it was then by *Literat Babel*, now by *Mistical Babel*, which is spiritually called *Sodom and Egypt*, where our Lord was crucify'd in his Body, the Church; as the Powers of this World were often let loose on the Church in the time of the Law, so now under the Gospel by the Powers of *Antichrist*, who are headed by Satan, call'd in Scripture, the *Dragon*: This Quartel against the Spouse, or Church of Jesus is propagated by this *Dragon* and his Followers call'd *Angels*; *There was War in Heaven, Michael and his Angels fought the Dragon and his Angels, and prevailed*,

neither was there any more place found for them in Heav'n; that in the Church, call'd Heav'n in the Book of Revelations. It seems then, that the Dragon and his Angels do not always prevail against the Church, their Power, Rage and Malice being so shut up, that they are not able to put 'em forth any further; there is no more Place found in the Church, for this Rage and Cruelty to vent itself; and why so? 'tis said, Michael, and his Angels fought and the Dragon fought and prevailed not; 'twas therefore, by the Power and Presence of Michael, and his Angels, that he prevailed not. Here's the Church's Comfort, that the scorching Sun of Persecution is not always on the Church. *The Wrath of Man shall praise thee, but the Remainder of it thou wilt restrain, The Rod of the wicked shall not always rest on the Back of the righteous, lest they put forth their Hands to Iniquity.* Thus, thro' him that loved us, the Church has her Intervals of Peace, as it was with the Church under the Law we find, that they rested sometimes, for a great while together sometimes forty Years, so under the Gospel, during the Rage of Antichrist, we have Liberty, notwithstanding the inveterate Spirits of some, the Spite and Malice of others. How big are they with Hops and Desires, to frustrate the Light and Glory of the Gospel, how glad wou'd they be to destroy the Purity of it, and its Professors; but God in Mercy prevents 'em: Thro' his Love we have Peace, and Plenty of the Gospel, Liberty, Light and Joy in our Dwellings, the Fulness of all Gospel-Ordinances dispens'd to us; but, *Jehonon wax'd fat and kicked.* The Lord grant it mayn't be our Case, that we mayn't be proud and lifted up, sin away and lose a improv'd Gospel, unthankful, carnal and unfruitful under a plentiful Gospel, provoke God to take away our Light and Glory, and shut us up in Darkness; but that all of us may live under this Gospel fruitfully, and in Christ who is the Fulness of Gospel-Grace, walk in, follow, cleave to, and exalt Jesus in Heart, Conversation, Prayer, Meditation, Reading, Hearing, and at his Table. And indeed we have more abundant Obligations in these Intervals, now the Enemy's shut up, and the Church has her Liberty, Light and Glory; we may well say, *The Lord is my Strength, and Song, and is become my Salvation;* and also, *There is the Voice of Rejoycing and Salvation in the Tabernacles of the Righteous; the Hand of the Lord doth valiantly.* Thus the Church has her Songs of Praise, Light and Glory, in those blessed Intervals during the Reign of Antichrist. But to conclude, if so, what a Song of Wonders will the Church's be, when the Kingdom of Antichrist is destroy'd, and her Seat burnt up with Fire, for *strong is the Lord who judgeth her;* if we consider, 1st. The Destruction of her Enemies, 2dly. The Multitude, who join in it. 'Twill be a Song for the general and publick Marriage of the Lamb, which before was private and small, *I will take two of a Tribe, and one of a City, and bring 'em to Zion,* but now the whole Body of the Elect, both Jew and Gentile are brought to it; *Let us rejoyce and be glad, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her self ready.* Thus let all the Churches sing, love, and praise his Name for ever, Amen. FINIS.

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